TAKASUGI-SAN'S OBENTO

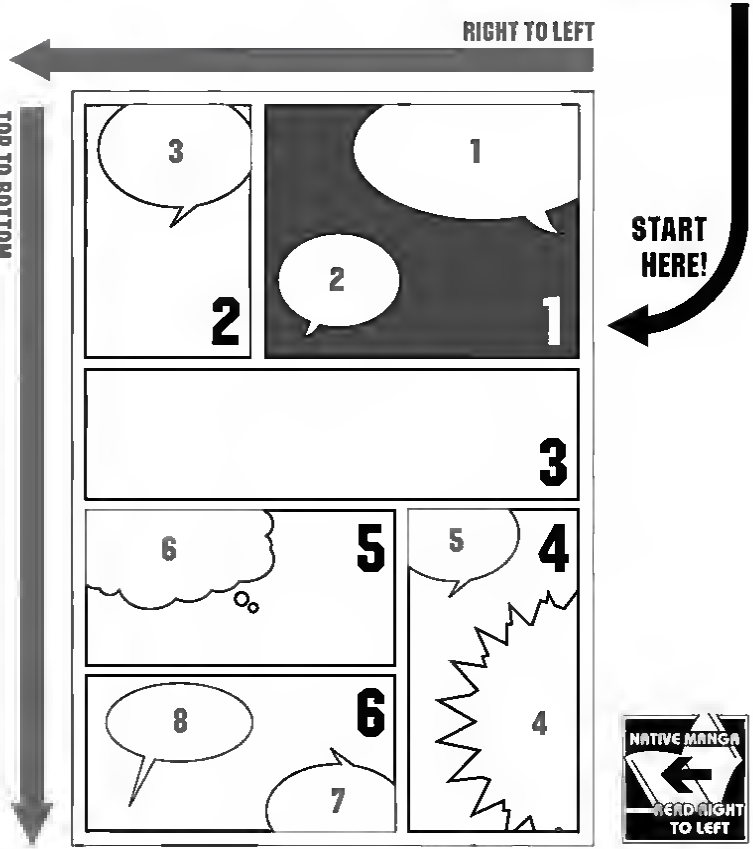
高杉さん家のおべんとう

-1-

Nozomi Yanahara

THIS GRAPHIC NOVEL IS READ IN ITS NATIVE FORMAT

READ EACH PANEL FROM RIGHT TO LEFT, TOP TO BOTTOM SEE HOW IT'S DONE BELOW!



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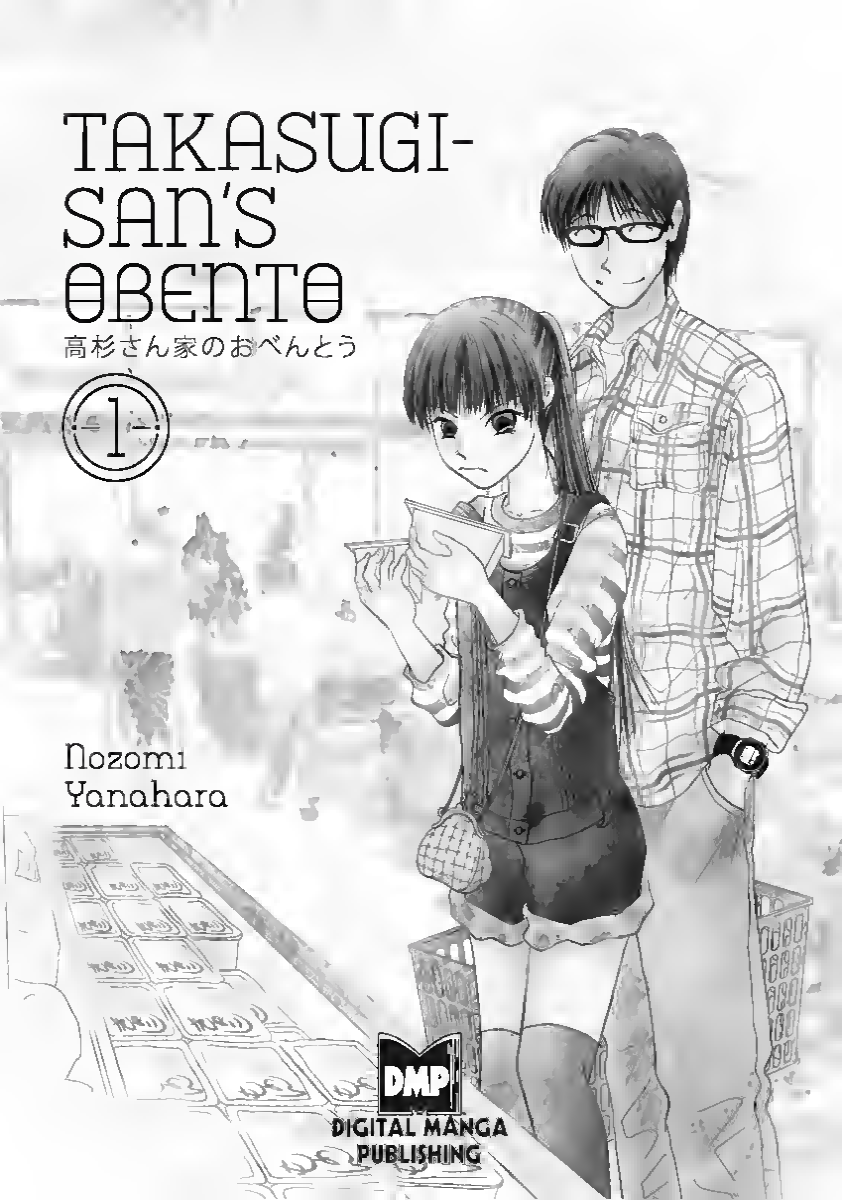

Nozomi Yanahara

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TAKASUGI-SAN'S BENTO 1

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CHAPTER 1: KINPIRA BURDOCK

EVEN IF I WAS GOING TO TRY TO GET SOMETHING AT A REGULAR COMPANY, WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF A MAJOR RECESSION.
I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO GET A POSITION AT A RESEARCH INSTITUTE OR A UNIVERSITY, AND
IT'S ALL FINE AND GOOD THAT I GOT MY PHD (GEOGRAPHY), BUT
IN HIS THIRTIES. STILL AT A CROSS-ROAD.
HARUMI TAKASUGI.
YOU SAY..
..I'LL REPLACE HER MOTHER, BUT..
SATAKE'S LAW OF LEGAL COUNSEL SATAKE
SHE'S TWELVE. SHE JUST STARTED JUNIOR HIGH THIS SPRING
HOW OLD IS KURURI AGAIN?
I DON'T KNOW. MIYA WAS A SINGLE MOTHER, SO—
WHAT ABOUT THE FATHER ?!
THE CORRECT TERM IS "GUARDIAN OF A MINOR."
I CAN'T!
IT WAS MIYA'S LAST REQUEST BEFORE SHE PASSED: IF ANYTHING HAPPENED, SHE WANTED HER DAUGHTER KURURI TO GO TO YOU, HARUMI.

I WORK PART-TIME...TOO MANY DOCTOR TES OUT THERE. NO ONE WOULD ENTRUST THEIR CHILD TO A POOR SINGLE GUY LIKE ME.
THOSE WERE MIYA'S INSTRUC-TIONS.
HARUMI, YOU LIVE IN THE CONDO YOUR PARENTS LEFT YOU SO THERE'S NO PROBLEM THERE.
KURURI WILL RECEIVE MIYA'S LIFE INSURANCE AND WORKER'S COMPENSA-TION.
THERE'S *MORE* THAN ENOUGH FOR HER SCHOOL AND LIVING EXPENSES 'TIL SHE REACHES ADULTHOOD
THIS IS A ROUGH CALCULATION, BUT YOU'LL BE PAID ABOUT THIS MUCH EACH MONTH FOR HER UPKEEP
I-I CAN CUT BACK ON MY PART-TIME HOURS.
GULP
WELL CONSIDERING THE FACT THAT SHE DOESN'T ACTUALLY HAVE ANY OTHER RELATIVES
KUUUURU-UUUR!!!!!!!
PLEASE COME IN, DEAR HARUMI'S GOING TO BE YOUR NEW FAMILY
KA-CHAK
NOT YET
FAMILY

EVERYONE SAID MIYA WAS BEAUTIFUL, BUT..
SHE LOOKS LIKE A PORCELAIN DOLL...
FAMILY..?
A LOT OF THIS LATELY
SAY, "PLEASE BE MY FAMILY"!
SQUEEZE

BUT IN THE WINTER OF MY SENIOR YEAR...
RRRR

THIRTEEN YEARS SINCE MY FAMILY FADED AWAY.
JUNIOR HIGH STUDENTS, WELL, THEY GROW SO FAST. A FIT LIKE THIS IS JUST ABOUT PERFECT.
...I'VE FORGOTTEN WHAT HAVING ONE IS LIKE.
TAKAMURA UNIFORMS
THIS OLD MAN'S BEEN RUNNING THIS SHOP A LONG TIME, BUT I'VE NEVER SEEN A GIRL LIKE YOUR PRINCESS HERE
IF YOU'RE IN TROUBLE, YOU JUST WHISPER IT TO THE OLD MAN HERE.
WHISPER
IT'S NOT LIKE THAT.
ANYWAY, WE DON'T LOOK LIKE FAMILY TO ANYONE ELSE.
SHE'S HER DAD? IMPOSSIBLE! HE'S SO YOUNG AND THEY DON'T LOOK ANYTHING ALIKE
AND IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DAY! ISN'T THAT A CRIME?
WHISPER
WHISPER
ひそひそ

KURURI, HONEY.
THE FACT THAT WE'RE NOT TALKING MAKES US LOOK EVEN MORE SUSPICIOUS.
WHISPER WHISPER
CHECKERED SHIRT, BACKPACK, GLASSES, HE'S TOO SUSPICIOUS
I'LL TRY TALKING TO HER.
MM-HM.
YOUR UNIFORM AND THINGS WILL BE DELIVERED TOMORROW
MM-HM.
SCHOOL STARTS NEXT WEEK
AND BY THE WAY, IT'S JUST....
KURURI.
BEEP!
THIS ISN'T A CONVERSATION. IT'S MORE LIKE CHECKING OFF A LIST.
BURDOCK
"HONEY"
...
IS CREEPY.

UM, SUPPER.. SHOULD WE PICK SOMETHING UP?
OH, GOOD!
吉田惣菜店
YOSHIDA SIDE DISHES
FAST TIME HELP NEEDED
KINPIRA
MIYA MADE SUCH GREAT KINPIRA
...
WHEN I WAS IN SCHOOL, YOUR MOM MADE MY BENTOS FOR ME.
OH? UH!
KINPIRA BURDOCK
I CAN MAKE THAT
MOM TAUGHT ME.
SHE'S ACTUALLY TALKING.
ALL RIGHT, GOOD, WE'RE TALKING.
YOU PUT THE SESAME OIL IN LAST
THAT'S THE TRICK.
PHEW
UH-HUH, UH-HUH.
"NEXT, I'LL TEACH YOU PUMPKIN."
-MOM
GULP
THAT'S WHAT SHE SAID BUT..

POLICE
THEY'RE RIGHT THERE, OFFICER
BLOG HE FELL ASLEEP IN THE MIDDLE OF UPDATING!
TITLE
CATEGORY
MAIN TEXT
MY FAMILY
BETTER GET UP
IS THIS MY PUNISH-MENT FOR MAKING KURURI CRY YES-TERDAY?
RAIN.
PSSH
PSSH

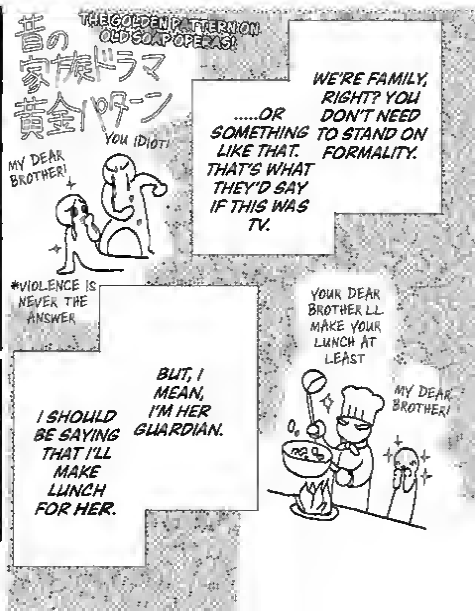
I CAN WORRY ALL I WANT, BUT IT DOESN'T CHANGE ANYTHING.
FIRST, JUST GET THROUGH TODAY.
SHIPPI
RESIDENCE CERTIFIC...
JUNIOR SCHOOL
UNIVERSITY MEETING
EMAIL (BY 4:00 P
崩壊 RUIN
虐待 ABUSE
FAMILY PLANNING
HMM... QUITE A LOT
LET'S CHECK OUT WHAT GOOGLE HAS TO SAY ABOUT FAMILY
FAMILY, HUH?
DOON
OH! SHE'S EATING
WE ATE OUT LAST NIGHT, SO WE DIDN'T ACTUALLY GET GROCERIES.
THINK THERE'S JUST BEER...
UH-OH. IS THE FRIDGE EMPTY?
SLAM
YIKES, KURURI'S BREAK-FAST!
IS THIS ACCIDENTAL CHILD ABUSE?

BEAUTIFUL GIRL IN SCHOOL UNIFORM MAKING BREAKFAST FIRST THING IN THE MORNING...
朝ぱらから セーラー服 美少女が 朝メシ 作ってる図
I HATE GETTING OLD...
I USED YOUR APRON
AND I PICKED UP SOME STUFF..
FROM THE STORE.
FOR A SECOND I THOUGHT IT WAS SOME KIND OF TAKE-OUT SERVICE! I'M SO UNQUALIFIED TO TALK ABOUT FAMILY.
AND...
HERE.
I USED YOUR WALLET.
OH. WHERE'D YOU GET THE MONEY?
KURURI.. WHY ARE YOU IN UNIFORM?
THEY DON'T SERVE LUNCH AT THE SCHOOL HERE
I'M PRACTICING MAKING LUNCH IN THE MORNING IN UNIFORM

UH...IT'S FINE. I ALWAYS EAT AT THE CAFETE-RIA.
KAI SLOVE
!
NNG!

TAKING CARE OF HER...
FROM NOW ON.
I'LL MAKE LUNCH ... AND STUFF.
YOU'RE TAKING CARE OF ME, AND ...

POOR!
BUT YOU SAID...
WE'RE POOR.

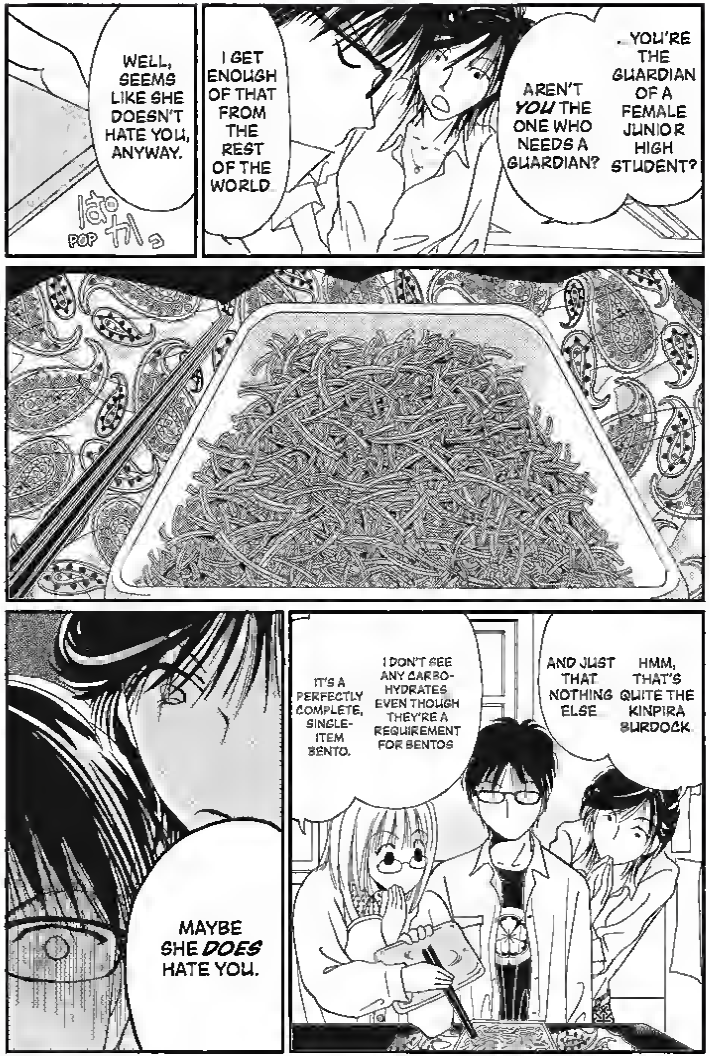

THE GOLDEN PATTERN ON OLD SOAP OPERAS!
昔の家族ドラマ黄金パターン
YOU IDIOT!
MY DEAR BROTHER!
*VIOLENCE IS NEVER THE ANSWER
WE'RE FAMILY, RIGHT? YOU DON'T NEED TO STAND ON FORMALITY.
.....OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT. THAT'S WHAT THEY'D SAY IF THIS WAS TV.
BUT, I MEAN, I'M HER GUARDIAN.
I SHOULD BE SAYING THAT I'LL MAKE LUNCH FOR HER.
YOUR DEAR BROTHER'LL MAKE YOUR LUNCH AT LEAST
MY DEAR BROTHER!

I HAVE TO ACCEPT THIS

WELL, HERE'S THE KEY! IF YOU NEED ANYTHING, JUST GO GET IT AND BE CAREFUL OF THE TRAFFIC!
SO THAT NO ONE THINKS SHE'S BEING KEPT AGAINST HER WILL
I CAN GET IT.
OKAY, THEY'RE GOING TO BE COMING WITH THE DELIVERY, SO—
I ACCEPTED ALL OF THIS WAY TOO LIGHTLY.
MAYBE I'M NO GOOD WITH FAMILY...

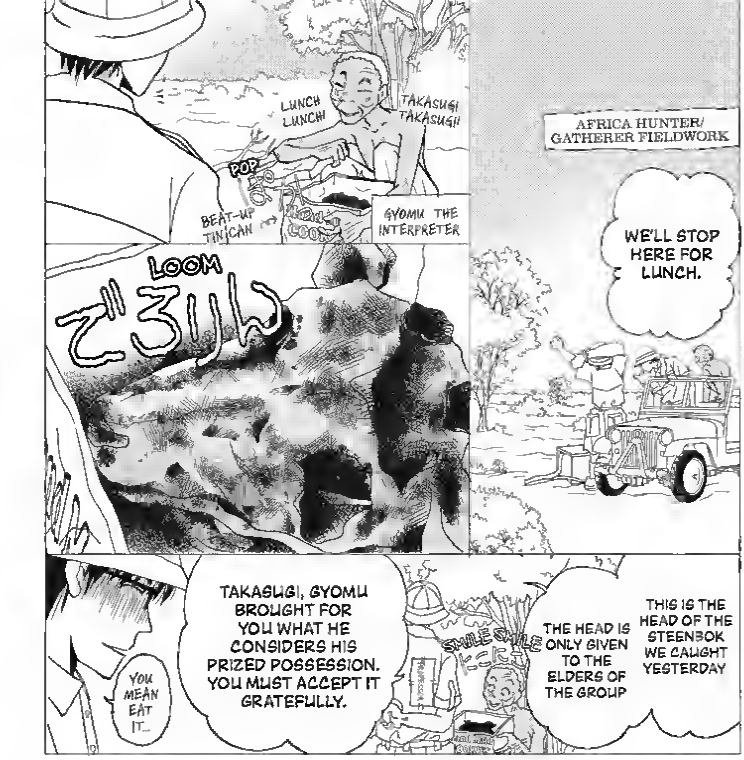
RESEARCH OFFICE
大学 ⇒
niversity 1Km

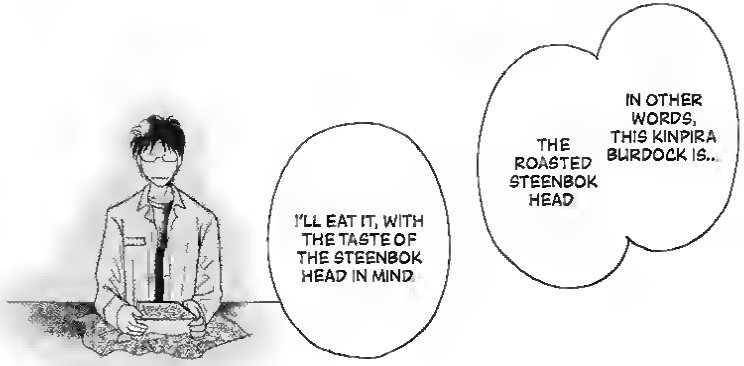
OH... KAYAMA, WHY'RE YOU HERE?
I *TOLD* YOU I WAS GOING TO BE WORKING ON PROFESSOR KAWASHIMA'S WOMEN'S UNIVERSITY PROJECT.
THAT'S STRANGE.
TAKASUGI, YOU BROUGHT A LUNCH TODAY?
JUST 'CAUSE YOU FOUND A JOB RIGHT AWAY...
CLASSMATES!!
YOU DON'T NEED TO MAKE HIM TEA.
KOSAKA! YOU'RE A SPECIAL RESEARCHER AND THIS GUY'S AN UNEMPLOYED BUM
I'LL GET YOU SOME TEA.
A GIRL! WHEN DID SHE MOVE IN?
SHE CAME YESTERDAY.
IT'S HER FIRST YEAR IN JUNIOR HIGH I HAVE TO GO GET ALL THE TRANSFER PAPERWORK SORTED
I TOLD YOU BEFORE SHE'S MY COUSIN.
SHE DOESN'T HAVE ANYONE ELSE, SO I TOOK HER IN.
SHE MADE THE BENTO FOR ME
SO, YOU FIIIINALLY GOT A GIRLFRIEND?


WELL, SEEMS LIKE SHE DOESN'T HATE YOU, ANYWAY.
POP
I GET ENOUGH OF THAT FROM THE REST OF THE WORLD
AREN'T YOU THE ONE WHO NEEDS A GUARDIAN?
...YOU'RE THE GUARDIAN OF A FEMALE JUNIOR HIGH STUDENT?
MAYBE SHE DOES HATE YOU.
IT'S A PERFECTLY COMPLETE, SINGLE-ITEM BENTO.
I DON'T SEE ANY CARBO-HYDRATES EVEN THOUGH THEY'RE A REQUIREMENT FOR BENTOS
AND JUST THAT NOTHING ELSE
HMM, THAT'S QUITE THE KINPIRA BURDOCK

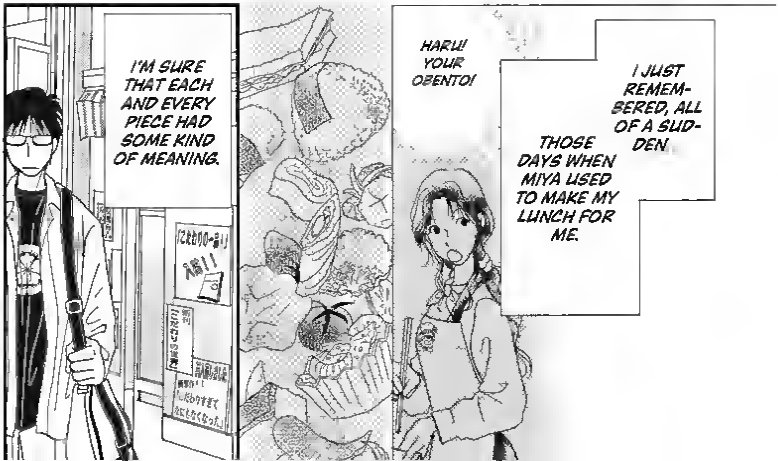
DON'T PLAY WITH YOUR JUNIOR
PAY CLOSE ATTENTION NOW
THAT'S THE FOUNDATION OF OUR DISCIPLINE. I'M INSTRUCTING MY JUNIOR
READ RELATIONSHIPS FROM PHENOMENA AND THE ENVIRONMENT
DON'T PLAY WITH A PERSON'S LUNCH
UMM...
OKAY, KOSAKA, WHAT DO YOU GET FROM THIS SINGLE ITEM?
HE WOULDN'T I EVEN FORGOT TO GO SHOPPING, SO ALL I HAD WAS BEER
WHAT DID YOU SAY?
HMM... WELL, FIRST OF ALL, WHAT ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT THERE WERE LEFTOVERS, AND SO SHE MADE THIS?
WOULD A MAN LIVING ALONE HAVE BURDOCK IN HIS FOOD INVENTORY?
HMM
THEN SHE WENT OUT AND BOUGHT IT HERSELF.
ARE YOU REALLY READY TO RAISE A CHILD?!
HAS A CHILD
AND THE CONVENIENCE STORE'S IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION.
SHE WOULDN'T KNOW ABOUT HER
I'VE BOUGHT THINGS FROM HER BEFORE
AN OLD FARM WOMAN COMES TO THE ARCADE IN FRONT OF THE STATION
I KNOW! MAYBE THE MORNING MARKET
SO, SHE WENT HUNTING AROUND AT RANDOM FOR GROCERIES?
THEY DON'T SELL BURDOCK AT THE CONVENIENCE STORE
SHE WENT TO THE CONVENIENCE STORE THIS MORNING
SO HOW SHE CAME TO HAVE IT IS A MYSTERY.

THIS SUCKS I'LL HAVE TO CHANGE
GOODNESS DEAR YOU'RE SOAKED TO THE SKIN DO YOU LIVE FAR FROM HERE?
OH! THAT'S WHY THE UNIFORM..
IT WASN'T GROCERIES SHE WAS AFTER, IT WAS BURDOCK. IF IT DIDN'T MATTER, SHE COULD'VE JUST GONE TO THE CONVENIENCE STORE.
A GIRL THAT AGE AND BURDOCK? WHY?
MOM TAUGHT ME.
KINPIRA BURDOCK.
WHAT? WHAT DO YOU KNOW?
RIGHT. THAT TIME WE WENT ON THE AFRICAN SURVEY WITH THE PROFESSOR.
IT'S JUST LIKE THAT.
OH!

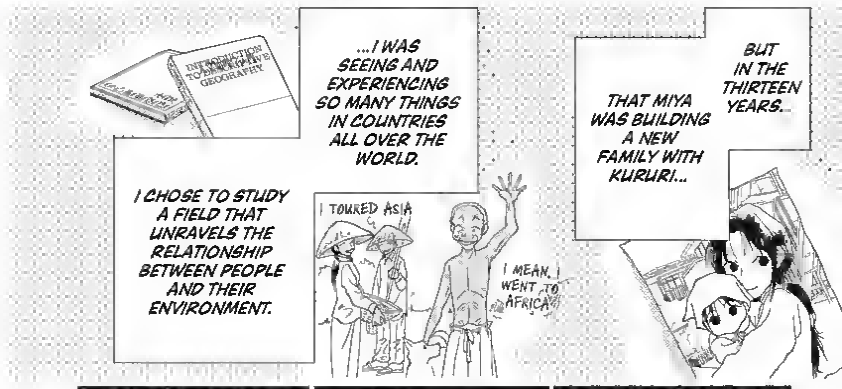

LUNCH LUNCH!
TAKASUGI TAKASUGI
POP
BEAT-UP TIN CAN
GYOMU THE INTERPRETER
LOOM
AFRICA HUNTER/ GATHERER FIELDWORK
WE'LL STOP HERE FOR LUNCH.
TAKASUGI, GYOMU BROUGHT FOR YOU WHAT HE CONSIDERS HIS PRIZED POSSESSION. YOU MUST ACCEPT IT GRATEFULLY.
YOU MEAN EAT IT...
SMILE
THE HEAD IS ONLY GIVEN TO THE ELDERS OF THE GROUP
THIS IS THE HEAD OF THE STEENBOK WE CAUGHT YESTERDAY

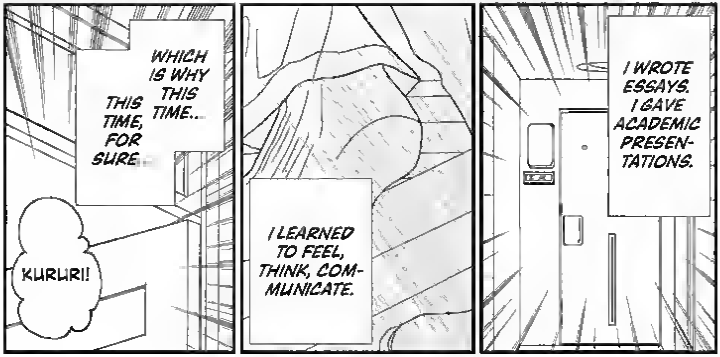

I'LL EAT IT, WITH THE TASTE OF THE STEENBOK HEAD IN MIND.
THE ROASTED STEENBOK HEAD
IN OTHER WORDS, THIS KINPIRA BURDOCK IS...

STEENBOK HEAD IS PRECIOUS, YOU KNOW
DO YOU WANT TO TRADE YOUR STEENBOK HEAD FO SOME FRIED
I'M PRETTY SURE THE KINPIRA BURDOCK WOULD TASTE BETTER IF YOU ATE IT AS KINPIRA BURDOCK.


I'M SURE THAT EACH AND EVERY PIECE HAD SOME KIND OF MEANING.
HARU! YOUR OBENTO!
I JUST REMEMBERED, ALL OF A SUDDEN.
THOSE DAYS WHEN MIYA USED TO MAKE MY LUNCH FOR ME.

I WONDER IF SHE LEFT 'CAUSE SHE COULDN'T HANDLE LOOKIN' AFTER ME ANYMO..E...
I JUST GOBBLED IT DOWN WITHOUT A THOUGHT.
MIYA PROBABLY FELT LIKE IT WAS ALL FOR NOTHING.
HARU! AT LEAST WASH YOUR OWN BENTO BOX!
AND ME...
UH-HUH


INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE GEOGRAPHY
...I WAS SEEING AND EXPERIENCING SO MANY THINGS IN COUNTRIES ALL OVER THE WORLD.
I CHOSE TO STUDY A FIELD THAT UNRAVELS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PEOPLE AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT.
I TOURED ASIA
I MEAN, I WENT TO AFRICA
BUT IN THE THIRTEEN YEARS...
THAT MIYA WAS BUILDING A NEW FAMILY WITH KURURI...


WHICH IS WHY THIS TIME... THIS TIME, FOR SURE...
KURURI!
I LEARNED TO FEEL, THINK, COMMUNICATE.
I WROTE ESSAYS. I GAVE ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS.

THEY CAME
DID THE DELIVERY
THERE'S SO MUCH YOU'VE DONE THIS.
YOU DID REALLY WELL WITH THE KINPIRA. BUT I THINK THAT IN GENERAL, SOME KIND OF CARBOHYDRATE, MAINLY RICE, IS A STANDARD PART OF THE BENTO. WHAT DO YOU THINK?
とりあえず誉めて
あとはひたすら突っ込む
GIVE A COMPLIMENT AND THEN ATTACK
PRESENTER
THAT WAS A FASCINATING PRESENTATION I HAVE A FEW QUESTIONS ABOUT IT
THIS ISN'T AN ACADEMIC PRESENTATION.
OR A Q&A SESSION

KLAK
カラ…
BEAH
もふぅ〜
SHE UNDERSTOOD.

I MEAN, I'LL MAKE THE THING FOR YOU!
KU-AK
OUCH!
THWACK!
...FAMILY.
THIS FEELING IS...
KURURI!
YOU CAN ONLY COMMUNICATE YOUR FEELINGS CLEARLY BY PUTTING THEM INTO WORDS.
NO, I CAN'T JUST LET IT SLIDE HERE.
CLENCH!

HM?
YOU GOT SOMETHING TO SAY?
言うことない？
HARUMI'S FEELING DUBBED IN!
IT'S...
NOTHING
I'LL JUST WRITE ABOUT TODAY...
SAYING THINGS OUT LOUD IS A FUTURE AREA OF STUDY
PHRASE OFTEN USED BY ACA-DEMICS
...ON MY BLOG.

CHAPTER 2: HAMBURGER TRIAL

HARUMI
TAKASUGI
AGE 31
保護者経験
NO EXPERIENCE AS A GUARDIAN!
KURURI
TAKASUGI
AGE 12
12 YEARS EXPERIENCE AS A DEPENDENT!
12年
IF YOU THINK ABOUT THE ROLES IN A FAMILY.
THEN I GUESS MY ROLE IS THE GUARDIAN.
PLEASE MAKE A FAMILY WITH KURURI.
SO KURURI IT'S BEARS, HUH?
SIGH
PROMISE

KRRR
YOU'RE IN THE WAY.
NIGHT
IF IT WAS LACE, I'D HAVE NO PROBLEM TELLING HER TO DRY HER UNDERPANTS IN HER ROOM, BUT...
KRRRR
KRRRR
NO, THIS IS EXACTLY THE KIND OF THING I SHOULD BE CONCERNED ABOUT AS A GUARDIAN.
WELL, ANYWAY, I'LL JUST DRY MY UNDERPANTS IN MY ROOM.
AND IT SEEMS KURURI WAS IN CHARGE OF HOUSEWORK.
IT WAS JUST KURURI AND HER MOTHER.
THE ONE BEING SUPPORTED!
SEEMS LIKE THERE'S NO ROOM FOR ME TO SUPPORT HER.
THAT WAS FAST! NOW SHE'S MAKING LUNCH?
BUT..
MNCH MNCH
もぐもぐ

SO MIYA TAUGHT YOU TO COOK?
CAN'T BREAK THE TENSION
MOM..
MADE A WEEK'S WORTH ON SUNDAYS.
FROZE IT.
THEN
YOU MICRO-WAVE IT.
I MADE..
SALADS AND STUFF.
CAN MICROWAVE A..
CONVENIENCE STORE BENTO
HMM
SO WE'RE IN THE SAME POSITION IN TERMS OF PLANNING AND PREPARING FOOD.
DON'T WATCH ME.
PER-VERT
BUT GIVEN HER EAGERNESS TO IMPROVE, A GAP WAS BOUND TO DEVELOP BETWEEN OUR SKILL LEVELS.
IF THIS KEEPS UP, I'LL JUST BE HERE TO LEND HER MY NAME LEGALLY.
DETERMINED
BOOKS APPARENTLY BORROWED FROM THE SCHOOL LIBRARY FOR A SHIFT ATTACK!
BUT WAS COOL WITH YOUR UNDERPANTS!

OKAY, YOU'RE COMING TOO, I GUESS
'COURSE!
DASH
I HAVE TO FIND SOMETHING THAT'LL MAKE ME FEEL LIKE A GUARDIAN.
KURURI?
I'M GOING TO GO GET SOME GROCERIES.
KURURI, WHAT DO YOU WANT FOR SUPPER TONIGHT?
MISO SOUP.
MAYBE THAT'S TOO CHEAP?
OH. OKAY
I'LL MAKE IT... MYSELF
HEALTHY AND SATISFYING! HOME BENTO FESTIVAL
PICK THE ONE YOU WANT.
I WANT.. MISO.
ORIGINAL MISO NAMEH FLAVOR

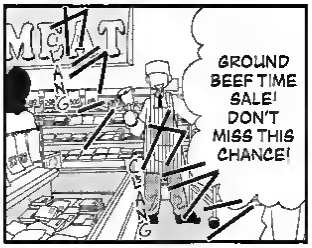
まるまる
スーパー
まるまる
MARUMARU
SUPERMARKET
NO.
WAY.
ADVERTISED ITEM
LIMITED TO ONE
PER FAMILY
MARUMAN MISO
100 YEN
100円
DREAM
MARUMAN
WITH SOUP STOCK
RED MISO
WE'LL
USE IT
TODAY
SO...
THIS
ONE
SHOVE
CLEARANCE
PRICE
OKAY,
HERE
FIRM
NEXT!
TOFU

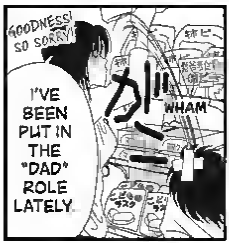
QUICK LIVELY
生き生き
NOT ONLY IS SHE GOOD AT PLANNING, BUT SHE SEEMS TO BE A VETERAN AT PROCURING.
WAS IT MAYBE HARD FOR HER TO SHOP AT THE CONVENIENCE STORE HER FIRST DAY?
TAKASUGI?!
YOU GO TO THIS SUPERMARKET, TOO?
KOSAKA ..
GAH!
KAYAMA
AREN'T YOU A CONVENIENCE STORE GUY, TAKASUGI?
PROFESSOR KAYAMA IS STAYING WITH ME TONIGHT
SO WE'VE COME SHOPPING TOGETHER
WE'RE SUMMARIZING THE DATA
WHAT WAS THAT "GAH" JUST NOW?
SO? THIS HER? THE COUSIN?
SHE'S. SHE'S ADORABLE!
KURURI, THEY WORK AT THE SAME CENTER AS...
HEE HEE!
OH, THAT NOW, THAT WAS KINDA GUARDIAN-ISH

WOW! YOU'RE MAKING SURE TO GET ALL THE SALE STUFF YOU'RE REALLY GOOD AT THIS.
WELL, PEOPLE FROM NAGOYA DO PUT MISO IN JUST ABOUT EVERYTHING
MY! YOU BOUGHT RED MISO.
SQUEAL
WHEE
MARUMARU SUPERMARKET
SO...NO, I CAN'T CHARGE YOU!
OKAY.
WE'RE GOING TO GET SOME.
SHOVE
DO YOU NEED MILK? THE SUNDAY SALE IS THE CHEAPEST, YOU KNOW
IF SHE WAS A LITTLE YOUNGER, I COULD DO LOTS FOR HER I BET, LIKE GIVE HER A BATH, FEED HER, THAT KIND OF STUFF
...
SEEMS LIKE SHE'S ALREADY MASTERED THE HOUSEWORK.
NOT MUCH FOR TAKASUGI TO DO, IS THERE?
KURURI?! LOOKED CRAZY-HAPPY THERE

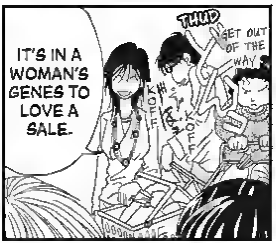
ごはん食べさせたり
お
FEED HER DINNER... GIVE HER A BATH...
I JUST MEANT I'D FEEL LIKE A GUARDIAN!
IS... IS THAT SOMETHING YOU WANTED TO DO?
HUF
HUF

EXCUSE ME! I'M GOING FOR THIS!
KURUR!, YOU COME, TOO!


MEAT
GROUND BEEF TIME SALE! DON'T MISS THIS CHANCE!
BANG


GOODNESS! SO SORRY!
I'VE BEEN PUT IN THE "DAD" ROLE LATELY.
WHAM

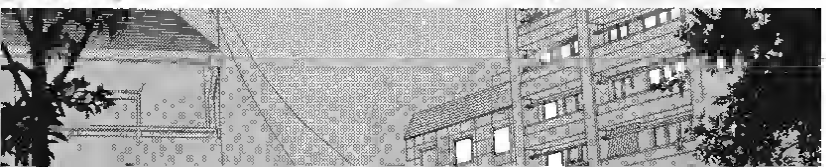
...
WHAT ABOUT YOU?
SIMPLE


IT'S IN A WOMAN'S GENES TO LOVE A SALE.
THUD
GET OUT OF THE WAY!
KOFF
KOFF

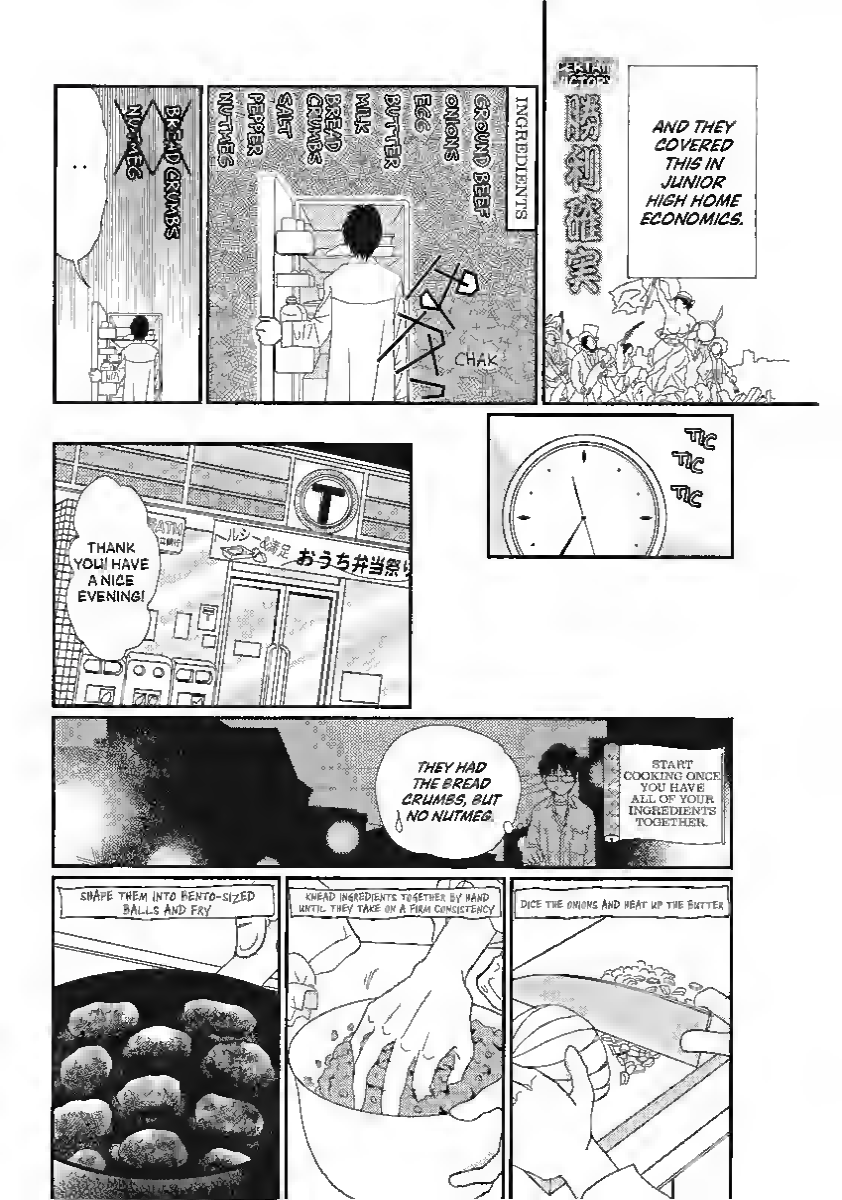
THAT REMINDS ME! YOU WERE BROUGHT UP WITH JUST YOUR MOM, RIGHT?
BUT PUTTING THE HOUSEWORK AND CHILD-REARING, EVERYTHING ON YOUR MOTHER—
IT'S CALLED UNCONDITIONAL ACCEPTANCE!
SETUKO KAYAMA AGE:58
30 YEARS' EXPERIENCE AS A HOUSEWIFE!
MUST BE NICE TO BE SO CONFIDENT EVEN THOUGH YOU DO NOTHING. WELL, I GUESS YOU NOURISH THEM, GIVE BIRTH TO THEM...
THIS GUY NEEDS TO SHUT UP...
SIGH
I MEAN, THAT'S SOMETHING, RIGHT? SOMETHING ONLY YOU CAN DO?
YOU ALWAYS THINK YOURSELF INTO CIRCLES AND NEVER DO ANYTHING. THAT'S WHY YOU WON'T GET A JOB.
LOOK.
SHE'S ONLY EVER LOVED AND LIVED WITH HER MOM...
OF THE PEOPLE STILL ALIVE, AREN'T YOU THE NEXT BEST THING?

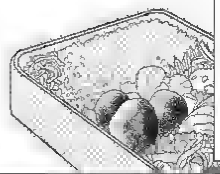
WE CAN FREEZE IT, MAKE MEAT DUMPLINGS, CURRY, OMELETS.
WE'LL USE IT!
WENT AFTER IT, BUT NOW REALIZES SHE DOESN'T KNOW HOW TO COOK IT
VERY PLEASED WITH HERSELF!
THE SPOILS OF WAR! WE GOT IT FOR SIXTY-EIGHT YEN A GRAM!
WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO WITH ALL THAT, KOSAKA?
WE'LL USE IT FOR BENTOS TOMORROW!
KURURI!
TO TAKE IT BACK.
YES. I'M GOING ...

I'LL MAKE...
... TOMORROW'S LUNCH!



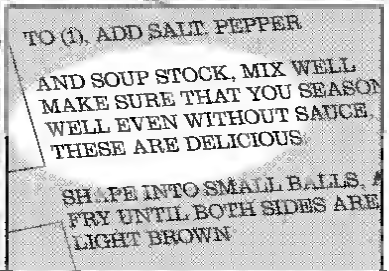
AAAAH
ほわあ
TINY AKAON OF GUARDIAN FEELING
HURRY UP AND GO TO SLEEP. YOU'VE GOT SCHOOL TOMORROW.
パタン
SLAM
FAMILY MEMORIES
DISHES WITH A REAL GUARDIAN FEEL TO THEM..
DAILY BENTO
EATING OUT WHEN THEY GOT A BONUS
IF I DO SAY SO MYSELF, THE BENTO WAS A NICE CHOICE.
IT'S THE AREA OF COOKING WHERE MY SKILLS ARE ON PAR WITH KURURI'S.
CHRISTMAS KARAAGE
LEARNED THAT THIS IS NOT THE CHRISTMAS CHICKEN AFTER GROWING UP
BIRTHDAY CAKE
ALWAYS STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE
I'M SURE KURURI'S HAD IT BEFORE, TOO.
MIYA ALWAYS SAID SHE WAS GOOD AT HAM-BURGER.
YOU WANT HAMBURGER AGAIN?
AND I'LL MAKE THE SUPERSTAR OF THE STANDARDS..
HAMBURGER
OKAY I'M GOOD AT THAT, I CAN DO THAT FOR YOU


AND THEY COVERED THIS IN JUNIOR HIGH HOME ECONOMICS.
INGREDIENTS
GROUND BEEF
ONIONS
EGG
BUTTER
MILK
BREAD CRUMBS
SALT
PEPPER
NUTMEG
CHAK
BREAD CRUMBS
NUTMEG
..
TIC
TIC
TIC
THANK YOU! HAVE A NICE EVENING!
おうち弁当祭
START COOKING ONCE YOU HAVE ALL OF YOUR INGREDIENTS TOGETHER.
THEY HAD THE BREAD CRUMBS, BUT NO NUTMEG.
DICE THE ONIONS AND HEAT UP THE BUTTER
KNEAD INGREDIENTS TOGETHER BY HAND UNTIL THEY TAKE ON A FIRM CONSISTENCY
SHAPE THEM INTO BENTO-SIZED BALLS AND FRY



BUT MIYA'S BENTO HAMBURGER NEVER HAD ANY SAUCE AT ALL.

OH, RIGHT. WITH HAMBURGER, YOU HAVE TO EAT IT WITH SOME KIND OF SAUCE OR SOMETHING.


TO (1), ADD SALT, PEPPER
AND SOUP STOCK, MIX WELL
MAKE SURE THAT YOU SEASON
WELL EVEN WITHOUT SAUCE,
THESE ARE DELICIOUS
SH..PE INTO SMALL BALLS,
FRY UNTIL BOTH SIDES ARE
LIGHT BROWN

IF I PUT KETCHUP OR SOMETHING ON THEM, THEY'LL BE FINE WITH THE OTHER STUFF.
I GUESS THIS TIME, THAT'LL JUST HAVE TO...
THE CONVE-NIENCE STORE...
THERE'S NO WAY THEY'RE GOING TO HAVE GROUND BEEF.
SHOULD I MAKE 'EM OVER?
I HAVE SOME OF THE OTHER STUFF, BUT I USED UP THE GROUND BEEF, WHICH IS THE MAIN INGREDIENT.
KLAK
RIGHT ARM AND RIGHT LEG TOGETHER
JERK JERK
KURURI ?
TOH LET!
KURURI WENT OUT IN THE RAIN LOOKING FOR BURDOCK.
TO MAKE THE KINPIRA...

BEEP
ARF
I REALLY OWE YOU ONE.
ANYWAY, I DEFROSTED THE GROUND BEEF FOR YOU.
WE WERE JUST ABOUT TO GO TO BED, YOU KNOW.
ARF
ARF
THERE'RE EVEN SOME STRANGE PEOPLE WHO MIX IN DEMI-GLACE SAUCE.
SOME PEOPLE USE WORCESTER SAUCE AND SOME USE KETCHUP
SOUP STOCK, RIGHT?
BY THE WAY, HOW DO YOU SEASON HAMBURGERS?
I USE SOY SAUCE.
ARF

SO MANY WAYS, HUH..
WELL, THAT'S THE HOME-MADE FLAVOR.
THANK YOU! COME AGAIN!
KETCHUP
SOY SAUCE
OYSTER SAUCE
SOUP STOCK
...WRONG.
THEY'RE ALL..
ALREADY TESTED..
PEOPLE FROM NAGOYA PUT MISO IN EVERYTHING.
MIYA, WHAT ON EARTH WERE YOU PUTTING IN THEM?
BUT THEY'RE NOTHING LIKE MIYA'S HAM-BURGER.
THEY'RE ALL GOOD IN THEIR OWN WAY.
OH!

I REALLY, REALLY OWE YOU BIG TIME!
ARF
OH. CAN YOU.. DEFROST IT? YOURSELF?
ARF
WE WERE SOUND ASLEEP, YOU KNOW!
ARF
大迷惑
SUPER PUT-OUT...
ZZZZZ
IF I FOLLOW THIS RIGHT TO THE END, I COULD GET A PAPER OUT OF IT!
I DIDN'T THINK HAMBURGER WAS GEOGRAPHIC!
I MEAN! IT'S THE REGION! THE LOCAL STYLE!
IT WAS MISO! MISO!
大興奮
SUPER EXCITED!
A SO-CALLED BOY BENTO
BROWN
A REAL SHOCK FOR A GIRL
THAT WILL BE AN INCREDIBLY BROWN BENTO
ARF
IS IT JUST HAMBURGER?
UM, HEY, TAKASUGI YOU'RE MAKING BENTOS, RIGHT?
OH... UH-HUH.
ARF
ARF

SNIFF
SNIFF
THE CRIME OF STEALING BEAUTY SLEEP FROM A WOMAN IS A SERIOUS ONE
PROFESSOR KAYAMA, YOU'RE TERRIBLE
RAISING THE BAR ON HIM AT THIS LATE HOUR
I GUESS YOU COULD JUST BUY SOME SALAD OR SOMETHING AT THE CONVENIENCE STORE AND TAKE CARE OF IT PRETTY EASILY.
EVEN IF YOU IGNORE NUTRITIONAL BALANCE, YOU NEED COLOR.
EASILY!
INCIDENTALLY, THERE'S NOTHING LEFT IN KOSAKA'S FREEZER
ARF
ARF
PLUCK
ARF
ARF
どだ?
WELL?
DO YOU KNOW THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE THERE?
MY LANDLORD
TUG
YANK
NOM
AND YOU PUT THEM ON DENGAKU TOFU, WHICH IS COOKED IN MISO. THEY'D PROBABLY GO WELL WITH A MISO-BASED HAMBURGER
UM... YOUR FOOT
HMM
PRICKLY ASH LEAVES...
THAT'S SOMETHING WITH COLOR

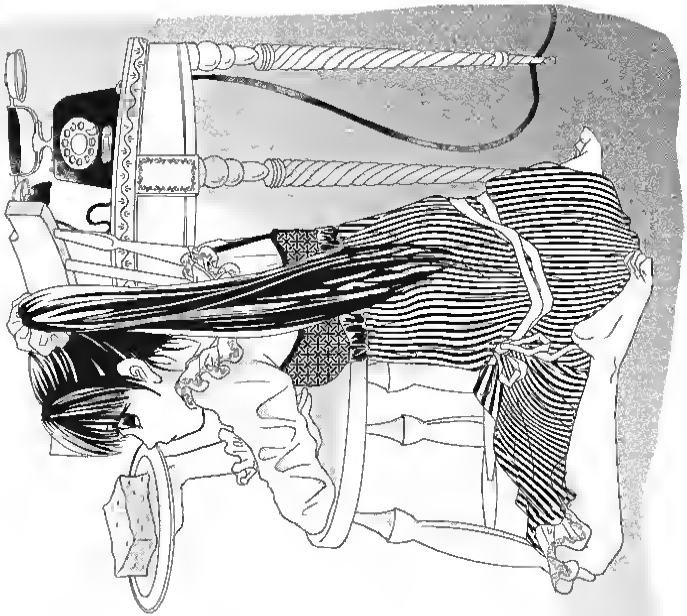
フィールドワークは現地調達が重要
IN FIELDWORK, LOCAL PROCUREMENT IS ESSENTIAL
IN ICELAND
NO IDEA TWO GROWN MEN
WHY ARE THOSE ASIANS LICKING THE GRASS?
LOOKS LIKE THE PEOPLE HERE DON'T EAT HORSETAIL. IT'S ALL FOR US!
WE DON'T HAVE ENOUGH MONEY FOR THE SURVEY SO WE'LL JUST EAT THESE TODAY RIGHT TAKASUGI!
WHEE
BUT THAT TREE'S IN SOMEONE'S GARDEN. YOU CAN'T JUST TAKE IT WITHOUT PERMISSION.
I'LL GO APOLOGIZE FOR THE BLOOD STAINS IN THE MORNING.
HE'S NOT PUTTING ON A SHOW THAT HE'S MASTERED HIS FIELDWORK AFTER BEING DRAGGED OUT THERE BY SOME PROFESSOR
OKAY!
SEE YOU LATER!
ARF
BLOOD
THAT DOG BEEN VACCINATED AGAINST RABIES?
SHE'S HAD HER SHOTS
THEN IT'S FINE
IS IT REALLY?
ARF
ARF
I'VE...
NEVER SEEN TAKASUGI SO PASSIONATE ABOUT ANYTHING.
SHUT UP!
ARF
IF HE'D JUST SHOW THAT PASSION IN INTERVIEWS, HE'D HAVE A GOOD POSITION BY NOW

I'VE DONE EVERYTHING I CAN.
BURNT OUT
I PUT THE TEST BURGERS IN MY OWN BENTO BOX, I DID ALL THE DISHES.
GOT RID OF EVERY TRACE OF MY TRIAL AND ERROR NIGHT.
KA-CHAK
PHEW! I SLEPT GREAT!
OH! KURURI! DO YOU WANT SOME COFFEE?
I DO.
GASP
COFFEE, COFFEE
OH, THAT.
TAKE IT WITH YOU TODAY.
SLAM

LEFTOVERS SET OUT TO ENCOURAGE TASTE TESTING
MMM
MMM
MMM

ARTIST'S VISUALIZATION
I COULD REALLY GET HOOKED ON THIS.
HAPPY FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY TOES, HAPPY ON THE LEVEL OF INDIVIDUAL CELLS...
100% PERCENT
GUARDIAN FEELING
MNCH MNCH
BUT I DON'T DARE TO SAY TOO MUCH HERE.
THAT'S ... THE TAKASUGI FAMILY RECIPE
PERFECT.
ARTIST'S VISUALIZATION

CIRCLE T
KINODE SHOPPING STREET 00-00-0000
WORCESTER SAUCE ¥208
OYSTER SAUCE ¥285
YAKINIKU SAUCE ¥334
KIMCHI SAUCE ¥238
TONKATSU KETCHUP ¥238
PONZU DRESSING ¥197
SUBTOTAL ¥195
(TOWN TAX)
TOTAL RECEIVED ¥1464
CHANGE ¥1464
?
GARBAGE CAN
GRRR
KURURI! LET ME EXPLAIN!
I REALLY HAD TO HAVE THOSE! REALLY!
NO. WAY.
PANIC
AND LATELY THE PRICES AT THE CONVENIENCE STORE HAVE BEEN GOING DOWN



CHAPTER 3: KONYAKU FEELINGS

MEAT!
AND POTATOES!
...THIS IS THE SITUATION.
LATELY, WHEN I COME HOME..
I'M HOME!
SHOVE
ESSENTIAL DISHES
UMM, MAYBE WE CAN USE THAT IN TOMORROW'S LUNCHES, TOO
OKAY, OKAY TONIGHT, WE'RE HAVING MEAT AND POTATOES
UM, KURURI! WE CAN AT LEAST BUY EGGS AT THE REGULAR PRICE!
IT'S TRUE I DON'T HAVE ANY MONEY, BUT YOU DON'T NEED TO WORRY THAT MUCH!
TODAY'S WEDNESDAY AND EGGS ARE ON SALE ON SUNDAY, SO
JUST TWO LEFT?
IF WE USE THESE TOMORROW, WE WON'T HAVE EGGS 'TIL SUNDAY
...
PRO TIP:
WHEN PUTTING THIS IN YOUR BENTO KEEP THE JUICE TO MAKE EGG DROP SOUP
ZAAA
RIGHT EGG-DROP SOUP SURE, SURE.

DRUNK ON THEIR OWN INCREDIBLE GROCERY STYLE!
IT'S YOUR HOBBY, ISN'T IT, KURURI.
WORRY
HEE
ALE!!
SALE STARTS AT FOUR!
THURSDAY
98円
WE'RE TAKING SMALL STEPS, BUT WE'RE STARTING TO GET THINGS SORTED OUT
I WONDERED HOW LIVING TOGETHER WOULD TURN OUT.
KURURI MAKES SUPPER AND I USE THE LEFTOVERS TO MAKE OUR LUNCHES.
ALWAYS UNPLUGS THE MICROWAVE!
YANK
THANKS TO KURURI.
MY LIVING EXPENSES HAVE GONE DOWN

ALL RISE!
BOW!
OKAY, THAT'S IT FOR TODAY.
HARUMI'S PART-TIME JOB NO 1: CONTRACT TEACHER AT A JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL
THE GRAPHS OF THE ANNUAL RAINFALL AND THE CLIMATE WILL DEFINITELY BE ON THE TEST.
MR TAKASUGI.
I HEARD ABOUT YOUR SITUATION.
YOU'RE TAKING CARE OF KURURI NOW?
MRS MITARAI.
WELL, I'M NOT SURE IF I'M TAKING CARE OF HER OR SHE'S TAKING CARE OF ME...
CLASS 1-2
...
PLEASE FORGET I SAID ANYTHING.
WOULD YOU BE LIKELY TO VIOLATE THEM IF YOU WEREN'T CAREFUL?
IF IT'S RELATED TO THE REGULATIONS ABOUT GUARDIANSHIP OF JUVENILES, I'M BEING VERY CAREFUL!
...THE PROBLEM, YOU SEE—

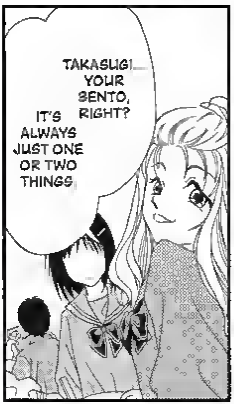
FWP
ACTU-ALLY ...
AND SHE ISN'T MUCH FOR SOCIAL STUFF TO START WITH...
WELL, SHE JUST LOST HER MOTHER ...
WAH
SHE SEEMS A LITTLE CUT OFF FROM HER CLASS.
DOMESTIC YOU CHICKEN LEGS
100 G 68円
100 G
鶏肉のホイル焼
IF I MAKE DEEP-FRIED CHICKEN
CHICKEN LEGS ⇦ ON SALE ON THURSDAYS
*STILL HAVE SOME ENOKI MUSHROOMS LEFT
SHIMEJI MUSHROOMS ⇦ SUBSTITUTE ENOKI
GREEN ONION ⇦ SHOULD STILL HAVE ONE OF THOSE
MISO ⇦ STILL SOME LEFT
IF I MAKE SALMON MEUNIERE
SLICED SALMON ⇦ ON SALE ON FRIDAYS
BUTTER ⇦ ON SALE ON THURSDAYS
FLOUR ⇦ BOUGHT SOME LAST WEEK
WHAT SHOULD I DO FOR THE GARNISH?
IT'S MORE LIKE SHE'S OBSESSED WITH SOMETHING ELSE AND HAS NO INTEREST IN SOCIALIZING
...
DELICIOUS!

教師生活
32年の勘
INSTINCT HONED OVER 32 YEARS OF TEACHING
WHAT?!
I SENSE THE RISK OF BULLYING

YES, I GUESS SHE IS.
BLUSH
KURURI'S AN ATTRACTIVE GIRL

WELL ...
BLUSH BLUSH
HER GRADES ARE GOOD, TOO.

I KNOW WHAT THIS ONE IS CHAKIN SUSHI, RIGHT?
NATSUKI! YOUR BENTO'S ALWAYS SO CUUUUUUTE!


TAKASUGI... YOUR BENTO, RIGHT?
IT'S ALWAYS JUST ONE OR TWO THINGS

KUKURI'S SO IN FRONT
NATSUKI KAYAMA. SHE'S SOMETHING OF A LEADER OF THE GIRLS IN THE CLASS.
SO?
AAAGH! SHE GOT ME!
GRANDMA MADE ME THE SAME LUNCH AS SHIHIRO!
WHO'S THIS SHIHIRO, MARUYAMA?
MY LITTLE BROTHER! HE'S IN KINDERGARTEN!
WHOA! A CHARACTER BENTO!

BEEEEE!
CHUUUUUUUUUTE!
DON'T SAY THAT!
THAT'S MITSURU MARUYAMA.
HE TENDS TO SET THE MOOD FOR THE CLASS. HE SAVED HER THIS TIME

HARUMI'S HOMEROOM TEACHER IN JUNIOR HIGH
IF I MAY, THE PROBLEM HERE IS *YOU*, TAKASUGI. THERE'S ALWAYS BEEN SOMETHING A LITTLE OFF ABOUT YOU.
DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU NEED TO DO AS HER GUARDIAN?

I HAVE TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF THINGS IN THE BENTO!

LONG GONE
TAKA-SUGI?
GET KURURI TO RELAX AND OPEN UP TO HER SURROUNDINGS MORE.
RESEARCH OFFICE
BENTO FOR BEGINNERS
SO WHAT'S HE GOTTEN INTO NOW?
HE SAID SOMETHING ABOUT INCREASING THE NUMBER OF ITEMS IN THE BENTO
IT'S SURPRISINGLY DIFFICULT TO FILL UP A BENTO BOX.
EVEN THOUGH IT'S SUCH A SMALL SPACE, IT'S LIKE STARING AT THE HORIZON SOMETIMES.
THERE'S STILL SPACE LEFT
ALL OF WHICH IS TO SAY THAT I'VE GIVEN UP ON PUTTING IN A LOT OF DIFFERENT THINGS.
PROFESSOR KAYAMA, PLEASE TRADE SOMETHING WITH ME
SURE
TODAY IS NOTHING BUT WIENERS

PACKAGE CRAB CREAM CROQUETTES
PACKAGE CHINESE STYLE SHRIMP DUMPLINGS
PACKAGE FRIED ONIGIRI
NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, JAPAN IS BENTO HEAVEN. NOWHERE ELSE IN THE WORLD CAN MATCH IT.
PRODUCTS TO HELP BUSY MOMS ARE EVERYWHERE.
INCREASING THE NUMBER OF THINGS IN THE BOX SHOULD BE A CINCH!
WASTING YOUR PRECIOUS TIME
SECRETS OF FREEZING FOOD
EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO FREEZE FOOD
AND ALL FROZEN FOOD'S HALF-PRICE AT MARUMARU ON MONDAYS
I GUESS SO
WHAT ABOUT SOME FROZEN FOODIES?
OH, THANKS
IT WAS IN THE JOURNAL THE OTHER DAY
OH, RIGHT TAKA-SUGI... THAT EXCERPT FROM YOUR PAPER?
BEEP
.....
GRR
IF I BUY ANYTHING FROZEN TODAY..
THURSDAY
SHUT UP
KURURI'LL GIVE ME THAT ANGRY GLARE.

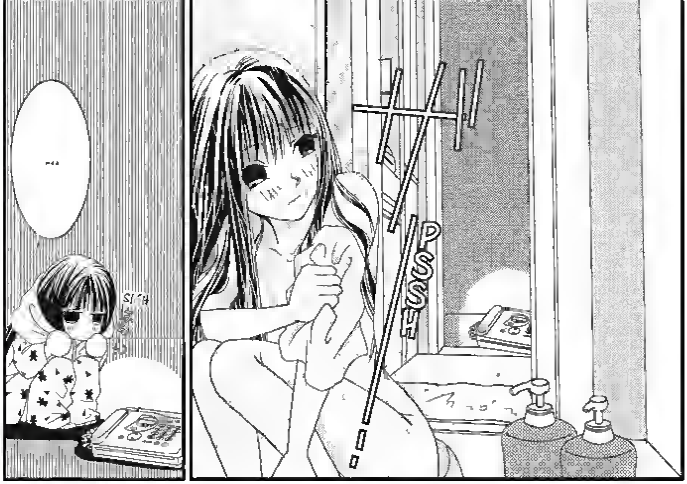
MR MIYOSHI?
I FINISHED THAT PAPER YOU WERE HELPING ME WITH BEFORE...
IS THIS MR. MIYOSHI? IT'S TAKASUGI. HOW HAVE YOU BEEN?
GIVE THOSE TO ME! I'LL MAKE SOMETHING FOR YOU. I'LL ASK SETSUKO (MY MOM)!
WHENEVER HE WENT, HE AAAAAALWAYS BROUGHT BACK A TON OF VEGETABLES AND TREATS
TAKASUGI WAS ALWAYS GOING UP THERE, THEY TREATED HIM LIKE THEIR GRANDSON.
TAKE THESE THESE TOO AND WITH THESE! YOU
I'M JUST ONE PERSON WHAT AM I GONNA DO WITH ALL THIS?
TAJIMI
NAGOYA
TOYOTA
TAKASUGI WORKED WITH HIM IN THE FIELD.
WAY UP IN THE MOUNTAINS IN GIFU. SOME PLACE CALLED KUSHIHARA. A WEIRD PLACE. YOU GET TO THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN, AND IT OPENS UP INTO A PLAIN.
TOMORROW'S LUNCH'LL PROBABLY BE SOMETHING FROM KUSHIHARA.
PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF LOCAL PROCUREMENT
DIDN'T YOU HAVE AN ULTERIOR MOTIVE?
PRETTY FAITHFUL TO THAT PROFESSOR OF YOURS UP THERE. GOOD FOR YOU.
I HAVEN'T GONE UP THERE ONCE SINCE SPRING.
IF I DRIVE FAST, I CAN BE THERE IN TWO HOURS.
YOU HEADED TO KUSHIHARA?

TAKASUGI, YOU'VE GOT THE BASICS DOWN.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY YOU CAN'T GET A POSITION ANYWHERE.
THAT'S THE THING!
I GO UP THERE A LOT TO SEE THE CHANGING SEASONS TOO, YOU KNOW.
BUT THE FOUNDATION OF FIELDWORK IS HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS
SO ONCE YOU BUILD THAT TRUST, YOU CAN GET MORE INTERESTING DATA.
OH, SOME GOOD DATA HERE.
OH!
IT'S CHEAPER TO GET HIS VEGETABLES AT THE LOCAL SUPERMARKET THAN TO PAY FOR GAS ALL THE WAY TO KUSHIHARA
HE'S *COMPLETELY* OBLIVIOUS TO THAT FACT THAT...
YOU GO AHEAD AND HAVE DINNER WITHOUT ME. LOCK UP AND GO TO BED
I'M GOING TO BE DRIVING A WAYS, SO I'LL BE A LITTLE LATE.
I'LL CALL AGAIN LATER
KURURI!
IT'S HARUMI.
CAR HIS PROFESSOR GAVE HIM FIVE YEARS AGO, WITH A MILEAGE OF 100,000 KM!

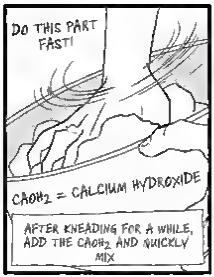
SIGH
はぁ
I'LL CALL AGAIN LATER.
S'POSE YOU'VE BEEN BUSY?
I'M SORRY IT'S BEEN SO LONG.
WELL, COME IN, COME IN!
OH!
SLAM
GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN!
OH, TAKA-SUGI!

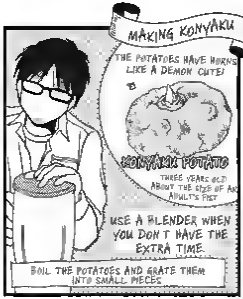
OH, IS THAT SOOO-OOOO!
I'M SORRY WE DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO SEND YOU HOME WITH TODAY, TAKASUGI.
THIS WEEKEND,
OUR GRANDSON IN TOYOTA CAME UP WITH HIS FRIENDS AND TOOK EVERYTHING FROM THE FIELDS
おさらい
PICKED CLEAN!
WELL, SHE'S A CUTE ONE.
HER NAME'S KURURI
SO YOU'RE THE FATHER OF A GIRL LIKE THIS, HM?
WHY, YOU'RE AWFUL. YOU HAVE TO BRING YOUR WIFE UP HERE TO SEE US
UH, NO, I JUST TOOK HER IN. .
ARE WE HAVING THE SAME CONVER-SATION?
OH! I SHOULD GET GOING.
I'LL BE BACK. AND NEXT TIME, I'LL BRING KURURI ALONG
ALREADY? YOU JUST GOT HERE.
TAKASUGI I HAVE TO MAKE SOME KONYAKU!
AND YOU ARE GOING TO HELP ME!
I AM?
BAM

...WELL, THIS IS HOW IT IS S'POSE YOU CAN STAY A LITTLE LONGER?
GET TO IT!
UH... SURE.
UM? ARE YOU LISTENING TO ME?
YOUR GIRL HAS TO HAVE SOME.
KUSHI-HARA'S FAMOUS FOR ITS HOMEMADE KONYAKU.
DAD, GO AND GET THE KONYAKU POTATOES FROM THE SHED!
GLANCE
"I'LL CALL AGAIN LATER."
PUSH
BEEP

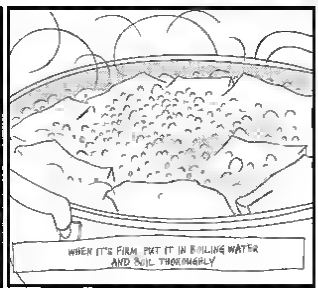

...
SIGH
PUSH

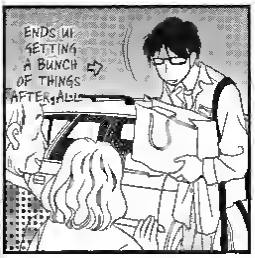
SOME PEOPLE GET ITCHY HANDS DOING THIS SO BE CAREFUL!
PUT THE MIXTURE IN A PAN AND LET IT SET


DO THIS PART FAST!
$CaOH_2$ = CALCIUM HYDROXIDE
AFTER KNEADING FOR A WHILE, ADD THE $CaOH_2$ AND QUICKLY MIX


MAKING KONYAKU
THE POTATOES HAVE HORNS LIKE A DEMON CUTE!
KONYAKU POTATO
THREE YEARS OLD! ABOUT THE SIZE OF AN ADULT'S FIST
USE A BLENDER WHEN YOU DON'T HAVE THE EXTRA TIME.
BOIL THE POTATOES AND GRATE THEM INTO SMALL PIECES

YOU SHOULD ALSO TRY IT FRIED WITH HOT PEPPERS!
IT TASTES BEST AS SASHIMI WHEN IT'S JUST MADE


WHEN IT'S FIRM, PUT IT IN BOILING WATER AND BOIL THOROUGHLY


ENDS UP GETTING A BUNCH OF THINGS AFTERWARDS

I'M HOME.
WHISPER

I GUESS KURURI'S ASLEEP.

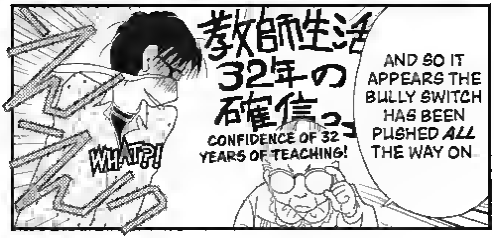
ぎゅっ

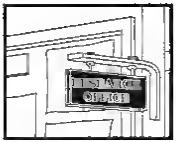
KONYAKU FRIED WITH HOT PEPPERS
STEWED YAM
SPINACH
FRIED EGGPLANT AND GREEN PEPPER
CAREFULLY DIVIDED BENTO
I WENT TO KUSHIHARA YESTERDAY.
THEY'RE FAMOUS FOR KONYAKU THERE.
UM, I'M NOT SURE IF YOU LIKE KONYAKU...
I...
...HATE IT.
ALL THAT WORK YESTERDAY!

ALL THAT WORK YESTERDAY?!
十十百百
THE FIRST STEP FOR BENTO BEGINNERS
MAKE RICE YOU CHOOSE, SPICE, SESAME SEEDS, FURIKAKE, NORI, ETC.
WITH A FEW SIMPLE THINGS YOU CAN MAKE A CUTE BENTO! IT'S NOT IMPORTANT TO BE FUNNY!
AH!
OVERCOOKED WORK. THIS ISN'T IT!
IT'S.
FINE.
LIKE THIS
OH... OH, YOU DO, DO WELL... YOU? WELL, SHOULD I TAKE OUT THE KONYAKU?
IS THIS.
SO TAKAGUSI YOUR BENTO... ... TODAY IS ONLY--
WOW! NATSUKI, YOU HAVE SUCH A CUTE BENTO AGAIN TODAY.
POP
I'M SO JEALOUS.

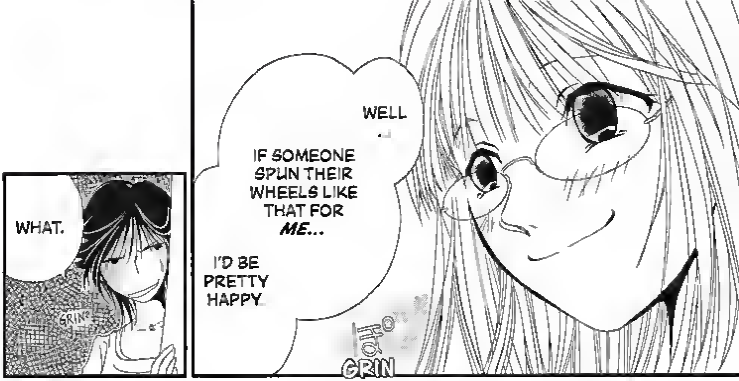
WHAT? AGAIN, MITSU-RU?
THAT'S SUPER CUTE! I WANT SOME!
WHOA! SHE GOT ME AGAIN TODAY!
MY HARD WORK'S PAYING OFF
MY, SHE DODGED THAT NICELY TODAY
DON'T TOUCH IT! I NEED IT FOR ENERGY THIS AFTER-NOON!
ME, TOO! I WANT SOME, TOO!
JUST A LITTLE BIT!
TAP TAP
JUST THE KONYAKU
WANT..
..SOME?
..
AH!
SOME

GLARE
めらっ
OH! THIS IS GREAT! THIS IS SUPER GOOD!


教師生活32年の確信っ
CONFIDENCE OF 32 YEARS OF TEACHING!
WHAT?!
AND SO IT APPEARS THE BULLY SWITCH HAS BEEN PUSHED ALL THE WAY ON



JUST LEAVE HIM BE
SO THE USUAL, THEN. SPINNING HIS WHEELS AT FULL SPEED
WHAT AM I GONNA DO?
MAYBE EVERYTHING HE WAS DOING WAS... WRONG?
SHUT UP!
うざっ
WHAT'S GOING ON?

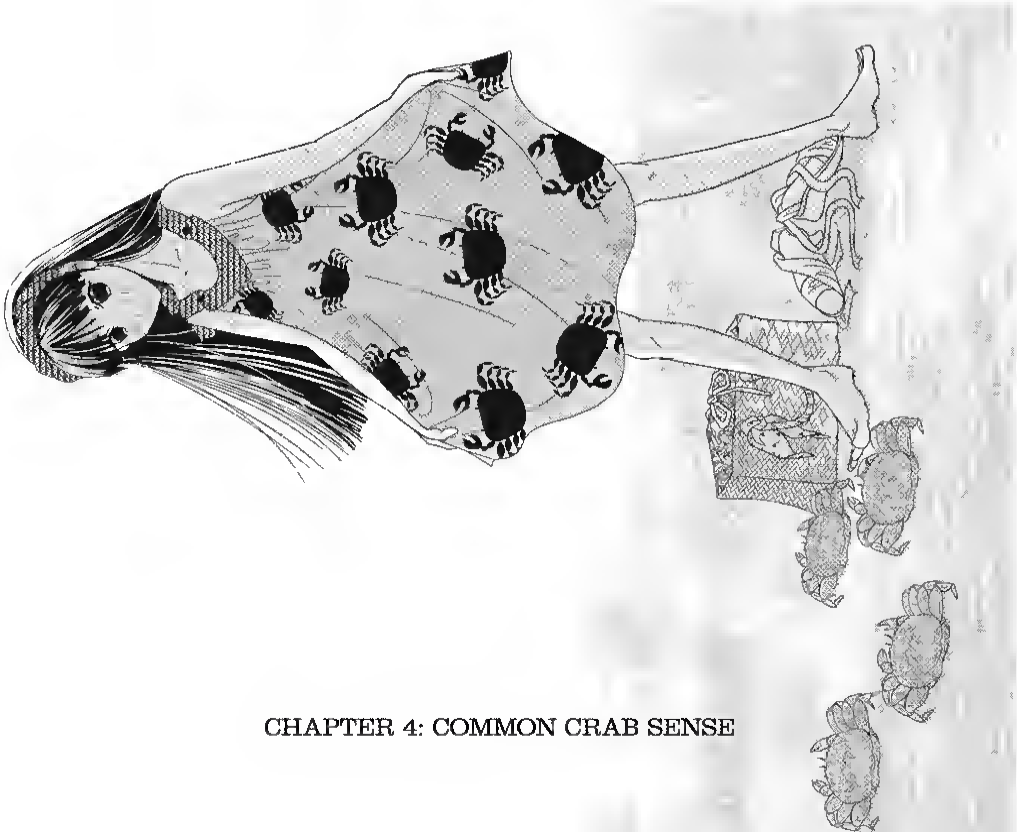

WELL...
IF SOMEONE SPUN THEIR WHEELS LIKE THAT FOR ME...
I'D BE PRETTY HAPPY.
GRIN
WHAT.
GRIN

ALL THE OTHER GUARDIANS OF THE WORLD SEEM SO INCREDIBLE.
THEY LOOK SO HAPPY.
UH-HUH UH-HUH

I WONDER IF THERE'S ANYTHING I CAN DO FOR KURURI.
MAYBE THERE'S A WEBSITE LIKE "HOW TO BE A GUARDIAN" OR SOMETHING.
OR MAYBE A MAILING LIST?
DOOMED FROM THE START WITH THIS KIND OF THINKING.

PSSH
PSSH
PSSH
TAKASUGI
I'M GOING TO COME AND GET YOU AND THEN WE'LL GO TO THE HOSPITAL TOGETHER.
THE POLICE CALLED AND SAID THAT YOUR MOTHER'S BEEN IN AN ACCIDENT.
TAKASUGI? THIS IS MRS. TANAKA FROM HOMEROOM. OKAY? I WANT YOU TO STAY CALM AND LISTEN TO ME.
SHE'S FINE. I'M SURE SHE'LL BE FINE.
SLAM!!
I'M HOME!
CLENCH

I SAID, I'M HOME!
PUFF
STIR-FRIED VEGETA-BLES!
OH, SURE, SURE. AND I CAN USE THAT IN TOMORROW'S LUNCHES, RIGHT?
DO WE HAVE ANYTHING ELSE I CAN PUT IN THERE...?
FRIED EGGS



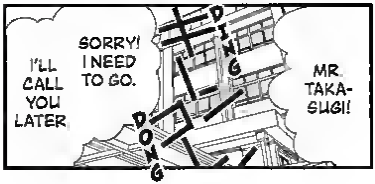
CHAPTER 4: COMMON CRAB SENSE

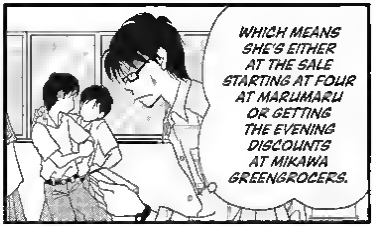
IT'S HERE!
OOH!
DING-
MS. KOSAKA!
DELIVERY!
DONG-
RESEARCH OFFICE
RINA KOSAKA IS FROM HOKKAIDO.
SHE CAME TO THE UNIVERSITY THIS SPRING AS A SPECIAL RESEARCHER.
CRAB
PROFESSOR KAYAMA, WOULD YOU LIKE ONE?
HM? YOU WANT TO TRADE LUNCH STUFF?
MY PARENTS SENT IT... THEY SAID TO GIVE SOME TO EVERYONE WHO'S BEEN HELPING ME OUT.
WHOA! THERE'RE AT LEAST TEN OF THEM IN THERE!
IT'S THE FIRST TIME, SO I GUESS THEY WENT ALL OUT, HUH?

I-I... I WONDER IF IT'S OKAY...
IF I GIVE SOME TO TAKASUGI?
SO EVERYONE WHO'S HELPING ME... WELL, THE PROFESSOR'S GONE AWAY ON BUSINESS, SO HE'S OUT.
THAT LEAVES YOU AND. UM. .
WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?!
I THINK THEY ACTUALLY HELD BACK BECAUSE IT'S THE FIRST TIME...
HEEEEE
BUT REALLY! THERE'S NO BIG MEANING HERE AT ALL!
I MEAN, PEOPLE FROM HONSHU, DON'T THEY RECOIL A LITTLE AT CRAB?
WOULD IT BE WEIRD?
YOO-HOO! TAKASUGI?
PROFESSOR KAYAMA?!
HEH HEH HEH!
THE POT'S HOT AND EVERYTHING.
A FRIED CRAB PARTY IT IS!
AT TAKASUGI'S PLACE.

I CAN'T ANSWER NOW. I HAVE TO ASK KURURI.
LIFESTYLE SUPER SALE SUPERMARKET MARUMARU ALL 88 YEN

WHAT?! TEN CRABS? SERIOUSLY?!
SULP
MR TAKASUGI! PLEASE REFRAIN FROM USING YOUR CELL PHONE ON SCHOOL GROUNDS


I'LL CALL YOU LATER
SORRY! I NEED TO GO.
DING DONG
MR. TAKA-SUGI!


WHICH MEANS SHE'S EITHER AT THE SALE STARTING AT FOUR AT MARUMARU OR GETTING THE EVENING DISCOUNTS AT MIKAWA GREENGROCERS.

TAKASUGI!

THEN AFTER SCHOOL
DID KURURI ALREADY GO HOME?

I SAID THAT WE SHOULD WAIT BUT
I STILL HAVEN'T ASKED KURURI...
DOES ANYONE NOT LOVE CRAB?
HUH? IT'S CRAB.
WE PICKED UP EVERY-THING WE'LL NEED.
MAINLY ALCOHOL!
TAKASUGI! SOMETHING BOTHERING YOU?
IT'S JUST SO SAD TO SEE YOU ALL ALONE LIKE THIS.
I MEAN, YOU'RE A TRANSFER STUDENT AND EVERY-THING
I WAS THINKING MAYBE I'D LET YOU IN ON SOME OF THE RULES OF BEING A GIRL.

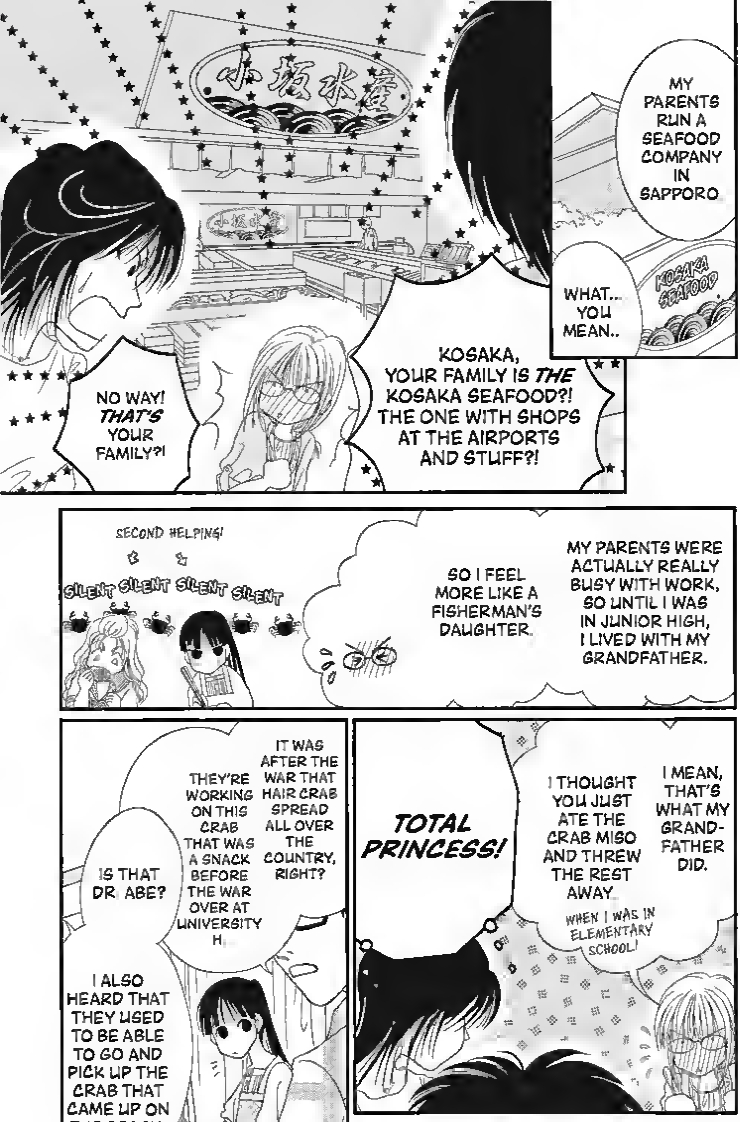
AH! SHE'S GETTING AWAY!
DASH
BANG BANG CHICKEN!
THE FOUR O'CLOCK SALE AT MARUMARU TODAY IS HALF PRICE ON ALL CHICKEN.
DINNER TODAY WILL BE...
わいん
GAH
OH, IS THAT KURURI?
M-MOM?
NATSUKI
H-HEY, YOU GIRLS!
WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?!
GASP
SHOVE

THANKS FOR HAVING US OVER!
MY, YOUR PLACE IS LOVELY.
YEAH, WELL, KURURI
HUH?
SULK
BUT, KURURI, WE GOT CRAB!
THE HALF-PRICE SALE . BANG BANG CHICKEN ..
UH, CRAB? ALL YOU CAN EAT? IF YOU DON'T WANT ANY, FEEL FREE TO GO HOME.
WHY DID I HAVE TO COME, TOO?
SHE'S NEVER HAD CRAB BEFORE..!
IS IT?
MORE EXPEN-SIVE THAN CHICKEN BREAST?
IS CRAB
RIGHT?
W-WELL, FINE. I'LL STAY FOR CRAB
CRAB MAGIC INEFFECTIVE
CRAB MAGIC!

SO THAT'S HER.
THAT GIRL MOM SAID WAS TAKEN IN SOMEWHERE 'CAUSE HER MOM DIED.
CHANGED CLOTHES
UH... WHAT'S WITH THE ATTITUDE?
NO REACTION!
FLIP
WHOA
OH, NATSUKI?
SHE'S NOT BEING MEAN.
I THINK IT'S MORE LIKE SHE'S JUST INTERESTED AND CAN'T HELP IT?
THAT GIRL LOOOVES PRETTY GIRLS
WELL, ANYWAY, LET'S JUST WAIT AND SEE.
CLANK
CLANK
ちら ちら
I REALLY WONDER WHERE SHE GETS THAT FROM
SHE ONLY KNOWS HOW TO BE OVER-BEARING WITH PEOPLE
DO YOU HAVE A KNIFE AND A CUTTING BOARD I CAN USE?
I'LL TAKE CARE OF THE CRAB!

OKAY! NOW FOR THE HOT PLATE AND THE GRIDDLE.
SHOVE
DIG
THANKS, KURURI. YOU'RE CLEARLY THE ONE DOING THE COOKING AROUND HERE
HERE!
I DIDN'T KNOW THERE WAS A HOT PLATE IN THERE.
PROFESSOR KAYAMA, HOW DID YOU KNOW?
WHEN WE WERE IN SCHOOL, I KEPT STUFF HERE.
FWOO
WHAT A SURPRISE! THERE'RE VEGETABLES IN THE FRIDGE? THERE USED TO ONLY BE BEER
OH, PERFECT. WE'LL FRY THIS UP, TOO.
CHA-
KOSAKA! CUT THIS UP.
UH... SURE.
THE LAST ONION!
THE CARROT AND SQUASH QUARTER I KEPT ASIDE FOR THE STEW I WAS GOIN' TO MAKE THIS WEEKEND
THE EGGPLANT I WAS GOING TO USE TOMORROW
KURURI! WE'LL MAKE UP FOR IT! OKAY?
SAORI
SAORI'S AN ICED TEA FROM THE FRIDGE AND MAKES HERSELF AT HOME

OKAY! LET'S EAT!
I BROUGHT CRAB SPOONS EVERYONE, TAKE ONE.
WE HAVE TEN OF 'EM THERE'S NO WAY I'M TAKING TINY BITES!
KURURI, GO AHEAD AND TRY IT.
TAKE THE BIG ONE
CRUNCH CRUNCH
BITE
WHERE'S IT FROM?
AT THIS TIME OF YEAR, PROBABLY OKHOTSK
ALTHOUGH I'D PREFER TO EAT THE ONES MY GRANDFATHER CAUGHT AT HIDAKA
YOUR FAMILY IS A FISHING FAMILY IN HIDAKA?
YUUKI BREWERIES
THE FIGHTING FACE DURING DINNER MEANS THAT THE CRAB IS GOOD.
YOU MANAGE TO COMMUNICATE WITHOUT EVEN TALKING
SILENT SILENT
SILENT SILENT


小坂水産
NO WAY! THAT'S YOUR FAMILY?!
KOSAKA, YOUR FAMILY IS THE KOSAKA SEAFOOD?! THE ONE WITH SHOPS AT THE AIRPORTS AND STUFF?!
WHAT... YOU MEAN..
KOSAKA SEAFOOD
MY PARENTS RUN A SEAFOOD COMPANY IN SAPPORO.
SECOND HELPING!
SILENT SILENT SILENT SILENT
SO I FEEL MORE LIKE A FISHERMAN'S DAUGHTER.
MY PARENTS WERE ACTUALLY REALLY BUSY WITH WORK, SO UNTIL I WAS IN JUNIOR HIGH, I LIVED WITH MY GRANDFATHER.
TOTAL PRINCESS!
I THOUGHT YOU JUST ATE THE CRAB MISO AND THREW THE REST AWAY.
I MEAN, THAT'S WHAT MY GRAND-FATHER DID.
WHEN I WAS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL!
IS THAT DR. ABE?
THEY'RE WORKING ON THIS CRAB THAT WAS A SNACK BEFORE THE WAR OVER AT UNIVERSITY H.
IT WAS AFTER THE WAR THAT HAIR CRAB SPREAD ALL OVER THE COUNTRY, RIGHT?
I ALSO HEARD THAT THEY USED TO BE ABLE TO GO AND PICK UP THE CRAB THAT CAME UP ON THE BEACH.

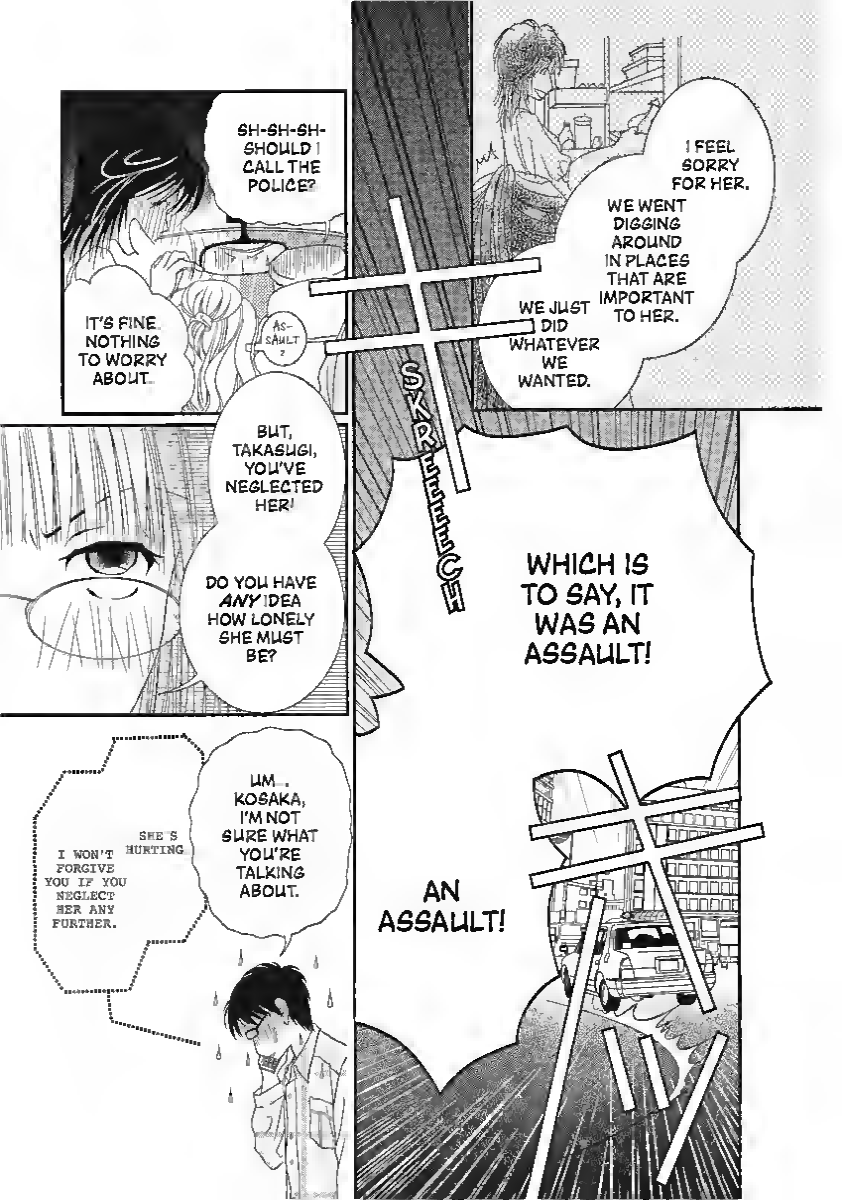
I WONDER WHERE THAT GIRL IS NOW.
THE ONE WHO SHOWED ME THE CRAB DIG .
PICK THEM UP HUH?
IN LAOS, THEY DIG THEM UP... A CRAB DIG
THEY USE A POLE TO DIG UP THE BABY CRAB IN THE FIELD DURING DRY SEAON
YOU WENT TO LAOS, TOO?
THE ONLY INCREDIBLE THING ABOUT THIS GUY IS THE NUMBER OF COUNTRIES HE'S BEEN TO. HE'S BEEN THE GOPHER IN ABOUT A MILLION PROJECTS
DON'T.
I WASN'T A GOPHER!
KNOW
HEY, WHERE'S LAOS?
STOMACH SWELLING FINALLY GIVING UP...
USE THE EMPTY CRAB SHELL AS A CUP AND POUR IN HOT SAKE
AND NOW THE BIG FINISH, SAKE IN THE SHELL!

AAAAH! THE CRAB MISO JUST MELTS IN YOUR MOUTH PERFECT!
HERE'S SOME MORE HOT SAKE
COME ON! DRINK UP! I MEAN, YOU WERE ALWAYS THE CRAZIEST WHEN THE PROFESSOR'D TAKE US DRINKING WAY BACK WHEN!
LET'S PRETEND THAT NEVER HAPPENED
MOM! GET IT TOGETHER! GEEZ!
YOU ALWAYS DRINK TOO MUCH!
HON-ESTLY!
IS IT NORMAL TO DRINK AT YOUR PLACE, TOO?
HM.
I NEVER KNOW ANYTHING SO
HEY! WHAT'S WITH THE ATTITUDE? YOU LOOKING FOR A FIGHT?!
...
KAYAMA! KEEP IT TOGETHER. LOOK, HERE'S THE TAXI!
MOM! I *TOLD* YOU NOT TO DRINK SO MUCH.

WELL, IT WAS CRAB, SO I GUESS I CAN LET IT GO THIS TIME.
WHY DOES POTLUCK MEAN EVERYONE HELPS MAKE EVERYTHING BUT THEN CLEAN UP'S LEFT TO US?
OKAY.. THEN.
ANSWER: BECAUSE EVERYONE GETS DRUNK AND CLEANUP NEVER HAPPENS!
I'LL DO IT!
KURURI, IT'S OKAY. I'LL CLEAN UP.
IT'S FINE!
PHEW!
IS SHE MAD...?
REMEMBERS WHERE THE HOT PLATE GOES.

WELL, LOOK. I TOLD YOU I LIVED WITH MY GRANDFATHER 'TIL JUNIOR HIGH, RIGHT?
THE FIRST TIME I LIVED WITH MY PARENTS WAS WHEN I STARTED HIGH SCHOOL.
YOU STINK LIKE BOOZE!
WHAD-DAYA MEAN?
WE DID SOMETHING BAD TO KURURI
GOODNESS, THREE YEARS AGO
IT WAS LIKE THIS LAST YEAR
SYNC
AND, I DON'T KNOW, I ENDED UP FEELING REALLY LOST, LIKE I DIDN'T BELONG ANYWHERE.
AND EVERYONE THERE KNEW THE HOUSE BETTER THAN MY PARENTS AND I DID.
THE HOUSE AND THE COMPANY WERE ATTACHED BACK THEN, SO THERE WERE ALWAYS EMPLOYEES COMING AND GOING
MISS THE CELLOPHANE TAPE'S IN HERE
HMM
AND NOW WE DID THE SAME THING TO HER. .
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?
YOU DRUNK?
I SPENT A LOT OF TIME SULKING.
BUT EVERYONE JUST DISMISSED ME AS A QUIET KID.
CHOMP CHOMP
NOM NOM
DEVOURING THE STORE'S MERCHANDISE SHE THOUGHT THAT IF SHE WAS JUST ALLOWED TO EAT THE SEAFOOD, SHE'D BE SATISFIED

AT THE HOUSE..
I ALMOST NEVER USE THEM AT THE HOUSE.
H-HELLO? TAKASUGI?
OH! THE CRAB SPOONS?
IT'S FINE WHENEVER
TAKASUGI
BA-DUMP
PANDORA'S BOX IS OPENED!
KURURI'S JUST A QUIET KID.
UM.. HOW'S KURURI...?
IF YOU THINK...
QUIET MEANS SHE'S NOT THINKING, YOU'RE SORELY MISTAKEN...
?
SHE'S HELPING ME CLEAN UP NOW.
SHE WAS SO QUIET, SO I WAS A LITTLE WORRIED.
DON'T WORRY.


I FEEL SORRY FOR HER.
WE WENT DIGGING AROUND IN PLACES THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO HER.
WE JUST DID WHATEVER WE WANTED.
SH-SH-SH-SHOULD I CALL THE POLICE?
AS-SAULT ?
IT'S FINE. NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT.
SCRATCHING
BUT, TAKASUGI, YOU'VE NEGLECTED HER!
DO YOU HAVE *ANY* IDEA HOW LONELY SHE MUST BE?
WHICH IS TO SAY, IT WAS AN ASSAULT!
AN ASSAULT!
UM.. KOSAKA, I'M NOT SURE WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.
SHE'S HURTING
I WON'T FORGIVE YOU IF YOU NEGLECT HER ANY FURTHER.

WHOA! HEY, BE CAREFUL!
'BYE
BEEP
NOT THAT. PLEASE FULFILL YOUR DUTIES AS A GUARDIAN.
PLEASE FULFILL YOUR DUTIES AS A MAN!
OOOOOH
HAHAHA! YOU TELL HIM!
FULFILL YOUR DUTIES AS GUARDIANS!
MOM! GLASSES LADY!
ERRRRRR, WH-WHICH WAY AM I GOING...
BUT WHAT EXACTLY AM I SUPPOSED TO DO...
BATON
I DON'T REALLY GET IT, BUT I GUESS I'VE BEEN THROWN THE GUARDIAN BATON.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT
MOTHERS
COMMUNICATION THROUGH HUGGING
FIRST OF ALL, PLEASE GIVE YOUR CHILD A HUG.
THE SILENCE IS KILLING ME...
BEEP BEEP
WHIRL
WHIRL
?
I THINK I'D GET IN TROUBLE WITH THE JUVENILE GUARDIANSHIP REGULATIONS.
IT'S ALREADY TOO LATE FOR US.

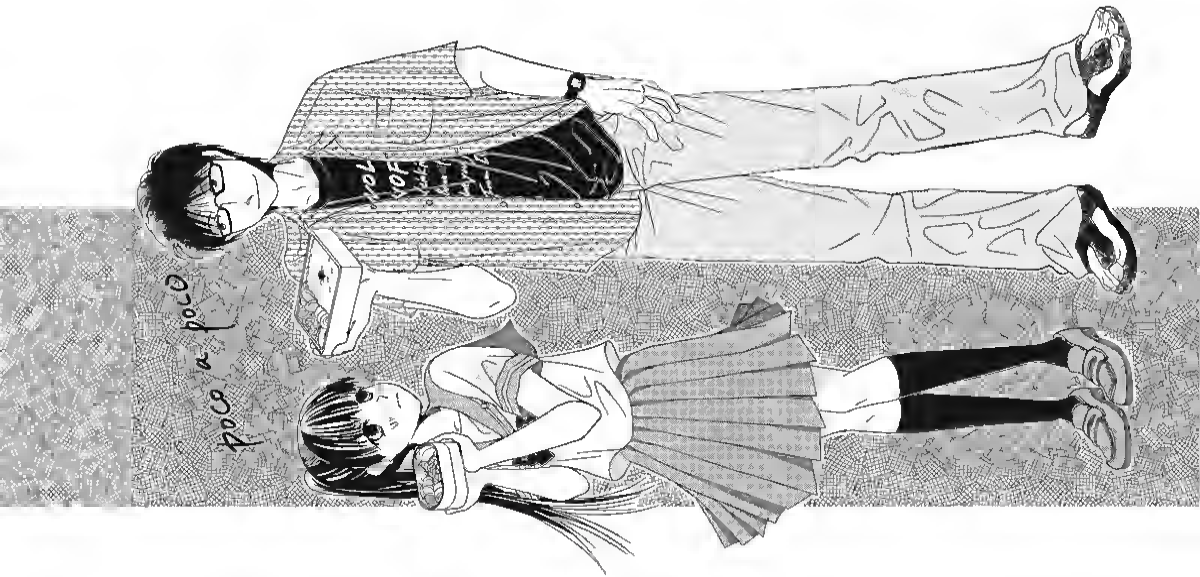
HEY.
DO WE...
CRAB LEGS EVERYONE LEFT!
...THROW THESE OUT?
KURURI! DON'T THINK THIS IS THE NORMAL WAY!
OH.
RIGHT.
HEY..YOUR MOM
I JUST REMEMBERED SHE AAALWAYS MADE OMELETS FOR ME WITH IMITATION CRAB MEAT.
WE'LL DIG OUT THE MEAT AND MAKE OMELETS...
FOR LUNCHES TOMOR-ROW
?

SHE MADE.
THEM FOR ME!
IT'LL PROB'LY BE AMAZING WITH THE REAL THING.
FOR YOU, TOO?
SILENT SILENT SILENT SILENT
カラ-
KLAK
HAPPY TO DIG IT OUT SO NICELY!
BEAM
AND MORE THAN THAT...
PHEW
I'M SO GLAD WE HAD CRAB.
IT'S OKAY EVEN IF WE'RE QUIET

I'M GLAD.
.. I STARTED MAKING THE BENTOS.
MY MOM'S OMELETS.
TOOK THIS MUCH WORK.
FAKE CRAB MEAT AND REAL CRAB ARE TWO DIFFERENT THINGS!
DON'T GET THE WRONG IDEA!
MOVED TO TEARS!
RESEARCH OFFICE
T-TAKASUGI ..
Y-Y-YESTERDAY ...
I-I-I DID SOMETHING EXTREMELY RUDE..

BEAM
ほわ
あ
NAH.
YOUR ADVICE REALLY HELPED.
ALTHOUGH I'M NOT SURE I REALLY FULFILLED MY DUTIES AS A MAN.
HA HA
I SAID THAT, DIDN'T I?
IT WASN'T A DREAM.
...
WOW! THANKS!
AND HERE ARE YOUR CRAB SPOONS.
OH RIGHT HERE. IT'S AN OMELET WE MADE FROM YESTERDAY'S LEFTOVERS. MAYBE EAT IT WITH YOUR LUNCH.
nagai
COULD WE LEAVE THE CRAB SPOONS AT YOUR HOUSE?
WE CAN HAVE ANOTHER CRAB PARTY.
OF COURSE, NEXT TIME, WE'LL GET KURUR!'S PERMISSION.

SPIN
SPIN
SPIN
IN THE MIDDLE OF A WILD FANTASY!
WHAT?!
I MEAN, YOU LEAVE LITTLE THINGS LIKE THIS AND IT JUST KEEPS HAPPENING.
BUT, WELL, YOU HAVE TO THINK CAREFULLY ABOUT THESE THINGS
MY FAMILY'LL PROBABLY SEND ME URCHIN AND SHELLFISH WITHOUT MERCY FROM NOW ON...
GLUSH!
I DIDN'T MEAN ANYTHING BY IT!
NO! THAT'S! !!
STEP1 BOOK
STEP2 CD or DVD
STEP3 PAJAMAS
STEP4 TOOTHBRUSH
STEP5 UNDERPANTS
KURURI AFTER FINDING OUT THE PRICE OF HAIR CRAB AT A HOKKAIDO DISPLAY AT THE DEPARTMENT STORE
HAIR CRAB FROM HOKKAIDO
THOSE BELONGED TO PROFESSOR KAYAMA...
PHEW
I'LL END UP HAVING YOUR STUFF FOREVER, JUST LIKE KAYAMA AND HER HOT PLATE AND GRIDDLE.


poco a poco

I MEAN, IF I WAS OUT DOING FIELDWORK, I'D HAVE TO GET UP EVEN EARLIER
I'VE STARTED WAKING UP AN HOUR EARLIER IN THE MORNING.
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BASH
I MAKE THE BENTOS.
CHAK
TODAY'S MAIN DISH'LL BE THE LEFTOVER CHICKEN TERIYAKI FROM YESTERDAY.
BUT I'M SO SLEEPY
I WONDERED HOW IT WOULD BE TO DO IT EVERY DAY, BUT I'VE SOMEHOW MANAGED TO KEEP IT GOING FOR THREE MONTHS STRAIGHT
NOW OUR BENTOS HAVE A LOT OF DIFFERENT THINGS IN THEM
WHAT WAS ALL THE FUSS ABOUT KONYAKU?
RECENTLY, I LEARNED ABOUT FREEZING STUFF.
YOU CAN EVEN FREEZE FRIED EGGS. I HAD NO IDEA..
BENTO
INSTANT OBENTO BATTLE!!
EVERYDAY OBENTO
I HAD NO IDEA THE WORLD WAS SO FULL OF INFORMATION ABOUT BENTOS.
APPARENTLY, INFORMATION YOU'RE NOT ACTIVELY ACCESSING MIGHT AS WELL NOT EVEN EXIST.

KURURI STARTED JOGGING RECENTLY.
PSSSH
KA-CHAK
THUKTHUK
SLAM
SOUND OF THE SHOWER RUNNING
SOUND OF THE DOOR OPENING
AND SHE JOINED THE LITERATURE CLUB, SHE'S A HOST MEMBER
'CAUSE SHE WANTS TO HIT THE FOUR O'CLOCK SALE AT THE SUPERMARKET
SLAM
HEY, WHY JOGGING, ANYWAY?
PREP WORK
MAYBE
?
KURURI, I JUST PUT THE RICE IN NOW
SO YOU'LL HAVE TO WAIT A BIT, OKAY?
NOD
YOU HAVE TO LET THE HEAT DISSIPATE A BIT BEFORE YOU TAKE THE LID OFF THE RICE OR YOU'LL HURT IT.
I JUST PUT THE FROZEN THINGS IN THERE WITHOUT DEFROSTING THEM.
THAT WAY WE DON'T NEED COLD PACKS AND IT'LL ALL HAVE DEFROSTED BY THE TIME WE'RE READY TO EAT
IT'S GOING TO BE HOT TODAY, SO EVERYTHING IN THE BENTOS IS ALREADY COOKED.

I MEAN, IT'S NOT FOOD YOU'RE GOING TO EAT NOW.
YOU PUT IT TOGETHER, WONDERING WHERE YOU'LL BE AND WHAT YOU'LL BE DOING.
MAKING BENTOS IS WEIRD TIME-WISE.
TODAY'S HIGH TEMPERATURE IS...
MAYBE I SHOULD PUT COLD PACKS IN?
COLD PACK
COLD PACK
YOU'RE WORKING TO PROVIDE JUST A LITTLE OF THE FUTURE.
RESEARCH OFFICE
TAKASUGI, DID YOU HEAR?
THEY DECIDED ON ASSISTANT PROFESSOR ITO FOR THE ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AT UNIVERSITY R.!
GUESS YOU COULD SAY I'VE BEEN TOO PRAGMATIC UP TO NOW.
SOME-HOW, IT FEELS LIKE A GROWN-UP THING.
GO TO THE CAFETERIA MAKE A QUICK DECISION BASED ON HOW I FEEL AND THE MONEY IN MY WALLET
TODAY FEELS LIKE CURRY

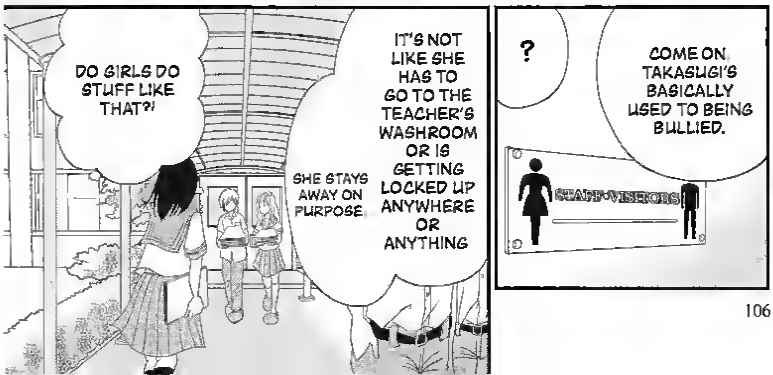
AND THE ASSISTANT PRO-FESSORS HERE ARE PRETTY MUCH DECIDED BY WHAT THE PRO-FESSOR WANTS, RIGHT?
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR FORMERLY, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR. FORMERLY A PERSON WHO WAS AN ASSISTANT SOMEONE DOING RESEARCH ON THEIR OWN
LECTURER FITS IN RIGHT HERE.
PROFESSOR IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT THIS IS THE PERSON AT THE TOP WORKING AT A RESEARCH ORGANIZATION
WOW ..SO HE'S GOING TO MOVE TO KYOTO?
THE POSITION WITH PROFESSOR FUYA IS OPEN!
WHICH MEANS THE ASSISTANT PROFESSOR ..
I...I'M JUST GOING TO THE TOILET...
KLATTER
ガたっ
ARMS AND LEGS TOGETHER
JERK
JERK
ぎくしゃ
IF WE GO WITH WHAT'S RIGHT, IT'S TAKASUGI, RIGHT...
PROFESSOR FUYA?
PROFESSOR KURO FUYA

WHAT?
MMM. BUT RIGHT ISN'T VERY INTERESTING, IS IT?
LIKE A REWARD FOR HIS PERSISTENCE.
I MEAN, IF HE CAN STAY WITH YOU, PROFESSOR
WELL, I SHOULD BE—
OH!
!
ガちゃ
KA-CHAK
O HO HO HO HO!
THEN ARE YOU PLANNING TO BRING IN SOME SPUNKY YOUNG THING FROM ANOTHER UNIVERSITY?!
WHAT?!
CERTAIN SENSE OF BEING OLD AND USED UP
CAN'T BE SAID TO BE YOUNG!
UH-OH.
HE HEARD ALL THAT JUST NOW.
ARMS AND LEGS TOGETHE...
JUST WONDERING WHEN I SHOULD GET THE DATA YOU ASKED FOR BACK TO YOU...
OH... UH.
HMM, THE BEGINNING OF NEXT WEEK'S FINE.
YIKES!

HE WOULDN'T... WAS THAT ON PURPOSE...?
O HO HO HO HO!
SHALL WE BET ON IT, KAYAMA?
APPLIC TO
REJECTED
DISAPPEARED FOR THREE DAYS
APPLICAT UNIVERS
REJECTED
LOCKED IN HOUSE FOR TWO DAYS
TAKASUGI WON'T BE COMING TO THE UNIVERSITY FOR A BIT NOW.
JUDGING FROM HIS PREVIOUS HABITS
PSSH
THEN I BET THAT IT WILL
O HO HO HO HO!
BUT I'LL BET ON IT NOT GOING TO THE RIGHT PERSON
I HATE LOSING.
PROFESSOR YOU REALLY HATE THE RIGHT THING, DON'T YOU?

OH!
THERE'S TAKASUGI.
TAKASUGI!
TAAAAKAAAA-SUGI!!!!!
CHATTER
CHATTER

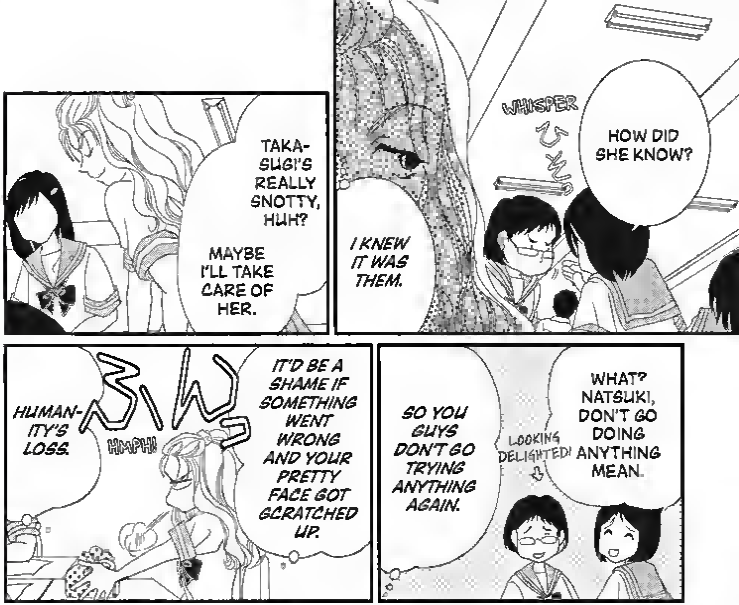
NO!
I'M NOT ALLOWED TO SAY "HI" TO MY CLASSMATES?
DEJECTED
YOU'RE TALKING TO TAKASUGI A LOT LATELY.
DANG.


DO GIRLS DO STUFF LIKE THAT?!
SHE STAYS AWAY ON PURPOSE.
IT'S NOT LIKE SHE HAS TO GO TO THE TEACHER'S WASHROOM OR IS GETTING LOCKED UP ANYWHERE OR ANYTHING
?
COME ON. TAKASUGI'S BASICALLY USED TO BEING BULLIED.
STAFF VISITORS

KUKU
ハロー
KAKU
OH IT'S MAKI!
HI, MAKI!
?
SO CUTE
YOU START TALKING TO HER, AND YOU BASICALLY MAKE HER THE ENEMY OF ALL GIRLS.
I MEAN, EVERY GIRL IN SCHOOL THINKS YOU HAVE THE FACE OF AN ANGEL.
YOU JUST DON'T GET IT!
BUT SOMEHOW THE BULLYING NEVER DISAPPEARS.
IF IT DID, THEN I'D BE IN CHARGE OF TAKASUGI
LOOK. ONCE IT'S DECIDED SHE'S GOING TO BE BULLIED, ALL YOU CAN DO IS GET A GOOD SEAT.
I MEAN, NO ONE WANTS TO GET THEIR OWN HANDS DIRTY.
GUESS I HAVE TO DO SOMETHING REALLY SPLASHY AND MEAN TO APPEASE THEM
YOU CAN'T!!
WHAT?! KAYAMA, YOU DO THAT STUFF, TOO?!

AS LONG AS I HOLD BULLYING RIGHTS, I WON'T ALLOW THEM TO DO ANYTHING TOO MEAN.
KAYAMA, YOU'RE LIKE A BIG SISTER...
WHO?
WHO DID IT?
DUNNO MAYBE THE FIRST PERSON BACK FROM THE MUSIC ROOM?
WASN'T ME I WENT TO THE TOILET.
MAYBE HER BAG JUST FELL ON ITS OWN?
GIGGLE
LET'S EAT!
AS IF IT WOULD JUST FALL!
MARU, STAY OUT OF THIS.

YANK
AAH!
WHAT'RE YOU DOING?!
GRAB
くいしっ
戻しっ
RETURN
……
YOU CAN'T DISRE-SPECT.
FOOD!
ALL RIGHT.
SHE'S SUPER STRONG.
THAT WAS SCARY!


TAKA-SUGI'S REALLY SNOTTY, HUH?
MAYBE I'LL TAKE CARE OF HER.
WHISPER
HOW DID SHE KNOW?
I KNEW IT WAS THEM.
HUMAN-ITY'S LOSS.
HMPH!
IT'D BE A SHAME IF SOMETHING WENT WRONG AND YOUR PRETTY FACE GOT SCRATCHED UP.
SO YOU GUYS DON'T GO TRYING ANYTHING AGAIN.
LOOKING DELIGHTED!
WHAT? NATSUKI, DON'T GO DOING ANYTHING MEAN.

HEY.
UH-OH, IT'S ALL MESSED UP

THOUGHT I MIGHT GIVE THEIR BENTOS A SHAKE, TOO.
ASAKO! ASAKO'S TOTALLY OBSESSED LATELY!
A BEAR.
INTO THE CHARACTER BENTO!
ASAKO! NICE SAVE!
POP
TAKASUGI. I KNOW YOU CAN'T MAKE ANY FRIENDS..
MY OLDER BROTHER'S MOM, RIGHT NOW, SHE'S OVERSEAS.
IN MY FAMILY, WE ALL HAVE DIFFERENT MOMS
ASAKO, SHE'S SHI-HIRO'S MOM
OH, SHIHIRO'S MY LITTLE BROTHER HE'S FOUR.
SHE SPEAKS GREAT ENGLISH
THEIR MOM'S IN TOKYO NOW.
MY BIG SISTERS— THEY GO HERE THIRD YEAR. TWINS.

KAYAMA, SHE KINDA TOLD ME ALL ABOUT YOU
..
SAME AS YOU, RIGHT?
GRAB
AND, OKAY.
MY MOM'S DEAD.
COME ON, TAKASUGI DON'T BE SO UPTIGHT!
SMILE! YOU KNOW?
OKAY?
BEING ALIVE'S FUN. FOR REAL
SO IT'S FUN.
BECAUSE YOU MAKE IT.
LIKE THAT.

KEEP HAVING..
.. FUN.
I.
CAN'T.
I'M NO GOOD AT THAT.
YOU'RE SMART
TIGHTEN
REALLY SMART
SLUMP
I THINK I FAILED.
THIS IS NO GOOD.
BA-BUMP
BA-BUMP
WHAT WAS THAT? SO TOTALLY UPFRONT.

I'M TAKING TOMOR-ROW OFF.
I DON'T HAVE ANY LESSONS TO TEACH.
I STILL HAVE SOME TIME FOR THAT DATA HE WANTS
I MEAN, EVEN IF I DON'T GET IT DONE, HE CAN JUST ASK WHATEVER YOUNG, PEPPY PERSON HE GETS
HE'D BE TOTALLY FINE WITHOUT A USED-UP GUY LIKE ME.
NEXT YEAR, THE YEAR AFTER THAT, MAYBE MY WHOLE LIFE.
WHAT IF I NEVER AMOUNT TO ANYTHING?
WHAT IF I KEEP ON LIKE THIS? WHAT IF I DON'T GET A POSITION ANYWHERE?
SAVE ONE PERSON'S PART OF THE LIMITED RESOURCES OF THE PLANET.
I COULD JUST JUMP FROM HERE.
SOMETIMES, THE FUTURE TOTALLY FREAKS ME OUT.

I'M HOME?
JUMP
H-HOW WAS SCHOOL?
KURURI!
HIDING DEER!
I-I FINISHED EARLY TODAY.
SO? TODAY'S EGGPLANT?
CHI-NESE EGG-PLANT..
I'LL BE FINE! I'LL LOOK UP THE RECIPE ONLINE AND PRINT IT OUT
KURURI, YOU GO ON AND DO YOUR HOMEWORK
GREAT! MAYBE I'LL MAKE DINNER FOR A CHANGE!
I AM WASTING THE WORLD'S RESOURCES.
KURURI ALWAYS BORROWS COOKBOOKS FROM THE LIBRARY.
THAT'S A WASTE OF INK AND PAPER
HERE!
YOU KNOW

INGREDIENTS (MAKES TWO)
EGGPLANT
MINCED PORK
ONION
GARLIC
GINGER
VEGETABLE OIL
!
WHEN PREPARING FOR USE IN A BENTO, DO NOT ADD THE POTATO STARCH AND WATER, BUT SIMMER UNTIL THE BROTH IS GONE!
BENTO...
THIS! RIGHT HERE!
IN THAT CASE, MAYBE I WON'T PUT THE GARLIC IN.
...
MAYBE I CAN DO IT.
HUH.
NOD

I CAN THINK ABOUT IT, FIGURE SOMETHING OUT, AND MAKE IT GOOD.
LEAVE THE PORTION FOR THE BENTO IN THE PAN OVER HEAT, ALLOWING THE MOISTURE TO EVAPORATE NEXT, ADD THE POTATO STARCH AND WATER TO THE PORTION FOR SUPPER AND ALLOW THE SAUCE TO THICKEN.
AT THE VERY LEAST, I CAN MAKE TOMORROW'S LUNCH.
I DON'T KNOW ABOUT A YEAR, TWO YEARS FROM NOW, BUT..
DIVIDE UP AFTER SEASONING
...I'M SURE I'LL BE ABLE TO WORK SOMETHING OUT.
NOD
I THINK IT WORKS WITHOUT GARLIC, TOO
IF I CAN MAKE JUST A TINY BIT OF THE FUTURE..
THEN ANOTHER LITTLE BIT, AND ANOTHER, AND ANOTHER...
BENTOS ARE ACTUALLY KIND OF AMAZING.
FOR BENTOS
I'M STARTING TO FEEL LIKE I MIGHT.

I MEAN, I MADE THE BENTO AND EVERYTHING.
I WAS MAKING KUKURIS ANYWAY
HUH. SO I ENDED UP COMING IN TO THE UNIVERSITY.
A MOTHER'S STRENGTH IS GLOBAL, BUT THE HOUSEWORK ITSELF DIFFERS REGIONALLY.
MAYBE I CAN TURN THIS INTO A PAPER.
MAYBE A MOM'S STRENGTH, HER SO-CALLED SOURCE, IS IN THE HOUSEWORK...
SMALL FEELINGS OF ACHIEVEMENT BUILD UP AND MAKE A PERSON STRONGER, RIGHT?
MAKING OUR SUPPER, AND THEN THE BENTOS, I GET A TINY FEELING OF ACHIEVEMENT.
WHAAAT?!
...

THIS SUCKS!
...
TAKASUGI! WHY ARE YOU HERE?!
SHOULDN'T BE?
WELL, WELL, TAKA-SUGI.
COME COME
WHY DON'T WE GO GET SOME UNAGI?
JUST GOT A BIT OF POCKET MONEY, SO IT'S MY TREAT.
WE CAN TALK IN MORE DETAIL THERE, BUT...
GU
WHUMP
ARE YOU INTERESTED IN BEING AN ASSISTANT PROFESSOR WITH ME?

I'LL MAKE YOU SUFFER FOR THE WHOLE BIT!
THE TEST OF A PROFESSOR WHO HATES DOING THE RIGHT THING.
DO IT! I'LL DO IT! PLEASE LET ME DO IT!
OH! OF COURSE, THERE'S THE TEST. THIS IS IF YOU PASS
GIGGLE
GIGGLE
SOOOR-RRY! BALL JUST GOT AWAY FROM ME!
BAM
TOSS
トス
WHIRL
ブン

SWISH
JOGGING PAYS OFF
GRAB
WOW!
THAT WAS SOOO COOOL, TAKASUGI!
S--GER

BEE
SLUMP
HOW MANY MINUTES? SECONDS? NOT YET? NOW? NO?
UNTIL THE MOISTURE'S GONE?! HOW LONG IS THAT?!
LOOK
IT'S BURNT
I'LL MAKE THIS AFTER-NOON.
GOOD, TOO.

CHAPTER 6: NATTO FRIED RICE AND SALMON ONIGIRI

DON'T BE SHY, TAKASUGI. IT'S MY TREAT.
UNAGI REALLY DOES TASTE BEST IN A RESTAURANT.
HMM. WHAT'S SHE LIKE?
YES.. HER NAME'S KURURI. SHE'S MY COUSIN.
TAKASUGI, I HEARD YOU'VE TAKEN IN A JUNIOR HIGH GIRL?
TH-THANK YOU.
うなぎの骨唐揚げ
ER.. WELL...
AND BE CAREFUL THIS IS A TEST QUESTION.
OH!
FOR WHETHER I HIRE YOU AS ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OR NOT.

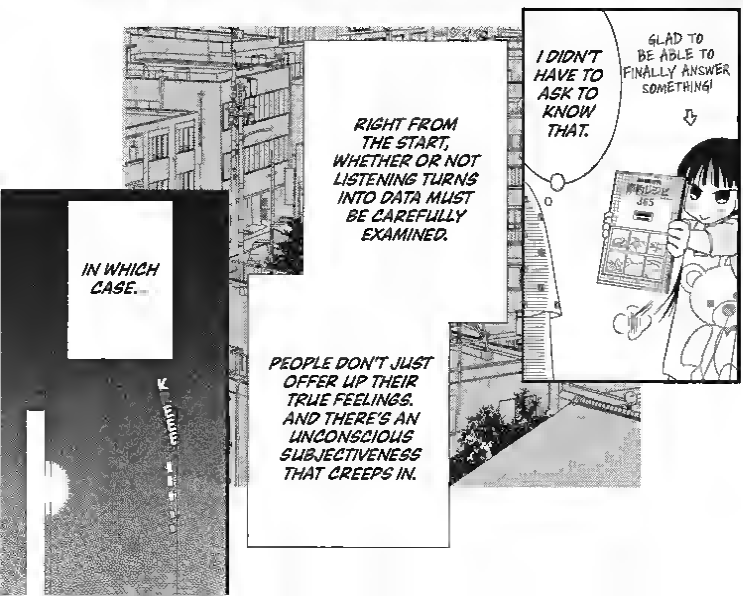
YOUR KURURI.
DESCRIBE HER FOR ME.
THE DEADLINE IS ONE WEEK FROM TODAY.
HARUMI TAKASUGI.
WELL, THEN! I'M OFF!
UH! PROFESSOR!
WHAT?
AND SPEAKING OF DESCRIBING "REGIONAL GEOGRAPHY"... WELL, WHAT ABOUT "REGIONAL GEOGRAPHY"? KOSAKA?
KAYAMA! WHY ARE YOU HERE?!
UM, UM
AAAAAH!
"WHAT KIND" THE FOUNDATION OF GEOGRAPHY, A HUGE ISSUE.
ONCE AGAIN, PROFESSOR FUYA HAS COME UP WITH A WONDERFUL PROBLEM.
UH!

AND HOW TO CAPTURE AND DESCRIBE THESE THINGS IS A SIGNIFICANT ISSUE THAT CONTINUES TO BE DEBATED EVEN TODAY.
IS REGIONAL GEOGRAPHY, THE FOUNDATION OF GEOGRAPHY AND A MAJOR FIELD OF STUDY.
DESCRIBING THE AREA COMPREHENSIVELY...
CLIMATE, NATURE, THE PEOPLE, THE CUSTOMS, PRODUCTS..
AND SO ON AND SO FORTH.
ON WHAT GROUNDS?!
WHAT DO YOU BASE THIS "EASYGOING" ON?!
THE PEOPLE OF THIS AREA HAVE AN EASYGOING TEMPERAMENT
プレッシャー
PRESSURE
IN OTHER WORDS, PROFESSOR FUYA IS TRYING TO GAUGE TAKASUGI'S SKILL AND POSITION AS A SCHOLAR.
LOVES THE FLYERS THAT COME WITH THE MORNING PAPER!
KURURI'S UNIQUE POINT IS PROBABLY HER LOVE OF A BARGAIN
FOR SURE.
THIS IS THE POSITION THAT IT'S IMPORTANT TO CAPTURE WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT THE AREA.
KO-SAKA?
I'LL JUST STICK TO THE BASIC PRINCIPLE.
THIS "BASIC PRINCIPLE" ISN'T "UNIQUENESS," IS IT?

HMM, WONDER IF HE'LL ACCEPT SUCH A FRAGMENTED DESCRIPTION
THUD
SHE'S QUIET! HATES KONYAKU!
FOR A JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL GIRL, THAT'S REALLY SAD
IS THAT ALL?
LIKES BARGAINS
BUST, WAIST, HIPS?
SO, WHAT'S KURURI'S NUMERICAL DATA?
A PATH AIMING TO EXPLAIN THE SPATIAL ASPECTS AND STRESSING NUMERICAL DATA
SPATIAL ORGANIZATION
SPATIAL REGULARITY
SPATIAL ORDER
AND YOU KNOW, THE DISCIPLINE IS OBJECTIVE. DATA. THE QUANTITATIVE REVOLUTION
IT'S FINE DON'T BE AFRAID
IT'S FOR MY RESEARCH
NO WAY!
SCHOOL SWIMSUIT FOR SOME REASON!
AW
I MEAN, I'M NOT DOING THAT!
SOMETIMES, YOUR RESEARCH COMES UP AGAINST MORAL ISSUES
HUF
T-TAKASUGI, MORALLY, THAT'S SOMEHOW...

NO NEED TO PLAY WITH A MAN AT A CROSS-ROADS IN HIS LIFE.
WELL, GOOD LUCK!
PROFESSOR, THE TIME...
RIGHT! I'VE HAD ENOUGH FUN TO MAKE IT WORTH PAYING FOR THE UNAGI.
ANYWAY, BASIC PRINCIPLES. BASIC PRINCIPLES.
AND THE BASIC PRINCIPLE IN FIELDWORK IS LISTENING.
TODAY IS PORK SHABU-SHABU AND SALAD
KURURI, WHAT KIND OF PERSON DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?
MAKE A NEW ATTACK ON THE CENTER FROM THE EDGES.
THAT'S SOMETHING I SHOULD'VE LEARNED IN THE FIELD.
THE JUNIOR HIGH KID WHO HAS AN EASY ANSWER TO WHAT KIND OF PERSON THEY ARE MUST BE PRETTY FREAKY.
AH! 核心
TOO DIRECT!
MNCH
...
...

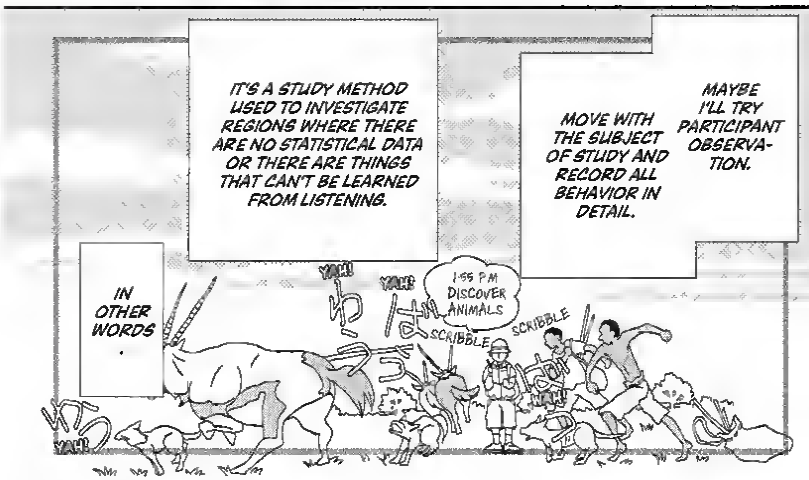
SORRY! A BOOK YOU'VE READ RECENTLY! YOU LIKE BOOKS, RIGHT?
GOT ANY FAVORITE BOOKS?
GLUG GLUG GLUG
I MEANT, WHAT ARE YOUR HOBBIES?
THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT. HOBBIES!
THINGS YOU DO FOR FUN
HOBBIES
HOBBIES HOB BEEEEZ
格安食材で作る
節約レシピ
COOKING ON THE CHEAP
MONEY-SAVING RECIPES
365


RIGHT FROM THE START, WHETHER OR NOT LISTENING TURNS INTO DATA MUST BE CAREFULLY EXAMINED.
PEOPLE DON'T JUST OFFER UP THEIR TRUE FEELINGS. AND THERE'S AN UNCONSCIOUS SUBJECTIVENESS THAT CREEPS IN.
I DIDN'T HAVE TO ASK TO KNOW THAT.
GLAD TO BE ABLE TO FINALLY ANSWER SOMETHING!
IN WHICH CASE...

SOME KIND OF RECORD LIKE A DIARY OR SOMETHING MIGHT BE MORE EFFECTIVE THAN DATA.
TI TOE
CALM DOWN
BUT COME ON, HER KEEPING A DIARY JUST WHEN I NEED HER TO WOULD NEVER HAPPEN.
RESEARCH
YAH!
YAH!
MORALS
GA
THERE IT IS!
DIARY
MM...
JUMP
UH! THIS! UM, IT'S! THERE ARE CIRCUMSTANCES!
SORRY, KURURI! IF I GET THIS POSITION, I'LL TREAT YOU TO UNAGI.
YAH!
RESEARCH
YAH!
YAH!
MORALS

MOM...
ゴゴゴゴゴゴ
KRRRRRRRR
MORALS
MORALS
RESEARCH
NOD
HOORAY!
HOORAY!
MORALS
OKAY, GIVING UP NOW..
KURURI, DO YOU KEEP A DIARY OR ANYTHING?
UH. .UM IF I ASKED TO YOU TO SHOW IT TO ME. .

...
GO AHEAD!
WAAAAAA
OF COURSE! JUST FORGET ABOUT IT!
YEAH! YOU WOULDN TI
ALTHOUGH IT'S STILL A PRECIOUS RESOURCE
THIS IS MORE LIKE A HOUSEHOLD ACCOUNTS BOOK, KURURI.
BLUSH
JUNE 15
POTATO: 4
CUCUMBER: 3, 77
ASPARAGUS: 3, 98 YEN
POTATO AND ASPARAGUS CHOPPED AND FRIED
CUCUMBER AND WAKAME SEAWEED PICKLED
CARROT AND ONION MISO
NO CUCUMBERS! (ES)
JUNE


IT'S A STUDY METHOD USED TO INVESTIGATE REGIONS WHERE THERE ARE NO STATISTICAL DATA OR THERE ARE THINGS THAT CAN'T BE LEARNED FROM LISTENING.
MOVE WITH THE SUBJECT OF STUDY AND RECORD ALL BEHAVIOR IN DETAIL.
MAYBE I'LL TRY PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION.
IN OTHER WORDS
YAH!
YAH!
1:55 P.M DISCOVER ANIMALS
SCRIBBLE
SCRIBBLE
YAH!

FOLLOW KURURI EVERYWHERE.
*IN A REAL STUDY, THE SUBJECTS GIVE THEIR CONSENT
MAYBE GEOGRAPHY IS A PERVERTED DISCIPLINE...
I DIDN'T FEEL GUILTY IN AFRICA THIS IS NO GOOD
1:20 P.M. BULLIED BY CLASSMATES
SUFFERS THE ATTACK
12:40 P.M. END OF MORNING LESSONS
EATS LUNCH ON ROOF (ALONE)
8:00 A.M. ARRIVES AT SCHOOL
TAKASUGI! MORNING!
GREETED BY CLASSMATE. SEEMS SLIGHTLY PUT OUT
3:10 P.M. LEAVES SCHOOL
WHOOPS! MY HAND SLIPPED
BULLIED ONCE AGAIN. DODGES
I NEED TO STAND FIRM AGAINST KAYAMA.
MR. TAKASUGI! WHAT EXACTLY ARE YOU DOING?
4:00 P.M. ARRIVES AT SUPERMARKET
スーパー まるまる
SUPERMARKET MARUMARU

PURCHASES ONE BOTTLE OF PONZU THE 4-00 SALE PRODUCT
TODAY'S RECIPE PONZU SO YOU KNOW WHAT TO PURCHASE
TAKES ALL THE FREE SUPERMARKET RECIPE CARDS
YOINK
TODAY'S MENU
SO FAST!
I STARTED TO CAUSE KURURI BUYS IT
NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, I DIDN'T EAT IT AT THE HOUSE 'TIL SHE BOUGHT SOME.
NATTO?
THAT'S VERY KANTO REGION.
PURCHASES NATTO (PRIVATE BRAND 3-IN-1 PACK)
KURURI WAS BORN AND RAISED IN TOKYO.
OKAY, SO MY MOM SAYS YESTERDAY, SHE FORGOT TO BUY EGGS SO I'M SUPPOSED TO GO GET SOME
WHAT?! SERIOUSLY?
I KNOW, RIGHT!
ALL ICE CREAM 50% OFF
THERE'S THE ICE CREAM! WHAT DO YOU THINK?
WILL THE BOX WITH SIX BE ENOUGH?
CHOCOLATE BAR! THE KIND WITH NUTS.

NAH, I DON'T REALLY GET THE FEELING SHE IS.
IF YOU BRING YOUR OWN BAG YOU GET POINTS.
I WONDER IF MAYBE SHE'S PUSHING HERSELF TOO HARD.
KURURI DOES THE HOUSE-WORK WITHOUT COMPLAINT.
THAT'S WHAT A REGULAR JUNIOR HIGH STUDENT IS LIKE.
TOTALLY.
I MEAN, GROCERY SHOPPING, THAT'S HER JOB, YOU KNOW?
HOW DID SHE END UP BEING THE KURURI SHE IS NOW?
IS SHE THE SAME AS SHE WAS WHEN SHE WAS LIVING WITH MIYA?
MIYA WAS MY AUNT
GRANDFATHER
GRANDMOTHER
YUICHIRO
MASAKO
FATHER
MOTHER
?
MIYA
TAKASHI
SANAE
KURURI
HARUMI
I WAS EIGHTEEN.
MIYA'S SEVEN YEARS OLDER THAN ME, AND WHEN SHE LEFT...

AND THEN THE FUNERAL, THE FIRST SEVEN DAYS, THE FORTY-NINTH DAY...
MIYA TOOK CHARGE OF EVERY-THING BY HERSELF...
INCLUDING TAKING CARE OF ME FOR THE ENTRANCE EXAM.
ANYWAY, JUST CONCENTRATE!
MY PARENTS DIED IN AN ACCIDENT, AND...
NOT LONG AFTER WAS THE UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE EXAM.
CAN'T BELIEVE I PASSED
THE DAY AFTER I FOUND OUT I PASSED, MIYA DISAPPEARED.
ON MY DESK WAS A NOTE SAYING GOOD-BYE...
AND OUR FAMILY'S SPECIAL SALMON ONIGIRI.
GOODBYE. TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF
MIYA
AND THEN...
MIYA? THE LAST TIME WE ALL GOT TOGETHER, I HEARD SHE WAS IN TOKYO.
SUMMER HOLIDAYS, FALL HOLIDAYS, WINTER HOLIDAYS, SPRING HOLIDAYS.
EVERY HOLIDAY BREAK, I WOULD TRAVEL FAR AND WIDE LOOKING FOR HER.
DO YOU KNOW HER ADDRESS, OR EVEN WHAT PART OF TOKYO SHE'S IN?
SORRY. BUT IF YOU GET IN TOUCH WITH ONE OF HER FRIENDS, THEY MIGHT KNOW.

I HEARD SHE HAS A KID NOW.
MAYBE SHE'S MARRIED.
OH... HUH.
IS THAT SO..
YOU WANT ME TO LOOK SOME-ONE UP?
NO! IT'S FINE!
AND THEN I QUIT SEARCHING FOR HER.
I GUESS I WAS SULK-ING.
I WAS LOOKING SO HARD FOR HER AND...
IT WAS LIKE I DIDN'T EVEN MATTER TO HER.
I WAS SUCH A KID
IF I HAD JUST TAKEN THAT ONE EXTRA STEP BACK THEN...
IF I HADN'T AVOIDED KNOWING BACK THEN...
I GUESS I SHOULD TRY AND ASK HER AGAIN ABOUT HER LIFE IN TOKYO.
SLAP

POLICE BOX
I'M TELLING YOU!
I'M HER GUARDIAN
えー!!
WHAAAAAT?!
HEY, THERE. MAYBE YOU'D LIKE TO ANSWER A FEW QUESTIONS FOR ME AT THE POLICE BOX
LET'S FIGHT THIS DISCRIMINATION!
MEN IN YOUR MID-TWENTIES TO THIRTIES WITH GLASSES, CHECKERS, AND MESSENGER BAGS!
THAT'S WHAT THE HOUSEWIVES SAID
PRETTY SUSPICIOUS AND CREEPY
I MEAN, USUALLY, AT YOUR AGE, WITH THE GLASSES THE CHECKERED SHIRT, THE MESSENGER BAG.
IF THAT'S THE CASE, THEN WHY WERE YOU FOLLOWING HER?
TUK
IF YOU'RE LYING TO ME I'M ARRESTING YOU RIGHT HERE
I'M GOING TO CALL HER ALL RIGHT?
I'M NOT LYING TO YOU!

THUMP
THIS IS THE POLICE. IS THIS THE HOME OF HARUMI TAKASUGI?
HELLO?
RRRRRRING
RRRRRRING
THE POLICE CALLED AND SAID THAT YOUR MOTHER'S BEEN IN AN ACCIDENT.
...YES.
HELLO? KURURI? IT'S HARUMI.
NERVOUS
FLUSHED
?
HELLO? HEL-LOOOO?
...YOU'RE OKAY?
...YOU'RE ALIVE?
SNIFF
SOME-THING'S STRANGE I HEAR CRYING ...?
GIVE ME THAT!

HEY! I'M JUST IN A LITTLE TROUBLE! I'M COMING HOME RIGHT NOW!
THIRTY—TWENTY MINUTES! I'LL BE THERE IN TWENTY MINUTES! OKAY?!
PLEASE COME WITH ME! WILL THAT BE PROOF ENOUGH FOR YOU?
UNDER-STOOD!
KA-CHAK
TIC
TIC
TIC
TIC
PHEW
SWING
KURURI!
OH, HEY THERE!
THIS PERSON DOES LIVE HERE, CORRECT—

K-KURURI?
HANDS THAT AREN'T SURE WHAT TO DO
AH!
SLAP
UH

KURURI! COME ON!
I. DON'T.
SO THEN, YOU KNOW THIS MAN?
GULP
WHAT?
WE CLEARED EVERYTHING UP! NO PROBLEM! A-OK!
HA HA HA!
I... I'M... SORRY.
DRIP DRIP DRIP
NATTO?
SPLASH
ICED TEA
YOU REALLY LIKE CHINESE, HUH?
THANKS FOR ALWAYS MAKING SUPPER HUH? TODAY IS FRIED RICE?
...UH, HMM? WHAT THIS IN IT...

MOM MADE IT FOR ME ALL THE TIME.
YOU DON'T LIKE IT?
MIYA DIDN'T USED TO KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH NATTO.
MIYA DID?
I HEARD IT'S GOOD FOR YOU. HA HA! YOU WANT SOME?
ABOUT THE ONLY THING SHE DID WAS MIX IT UP AND PUT IT ON RICE
SHE LEARNED HOW AFTER SHE WENT TO TOKYO.
TOKYO.. HUH?
. GAVE SHAPE TO KURURI.
TIME AND SPACE.
?
LET'S EAT!
HE'S ONE OF THE FOUNDERS OF GEOGRAPHY
GUESS I HAVE TO GO BACK TO HUMBOLDT!

?
?
?
IN OTHER WORDS
THE BASIC PRINCIPLE IS TO LOOK AT EVERY-THING.
HE WAS A BRILLIANT MAN WHO WORKED HARD TO CAPTURE THE "KOSMOS"..
MADE UP OF ALL THESE ORGANICALLY-LINKED ELEMENTS.
CALCULATE
MEASURE
RECORD
COLLECT
WEIGH
HE WENT DIRECTLY TO THE AREA..
HE WATCHED, LISTENED, MEASURED, RECORDED, AND COLLECTED EVERYTHING, ALL OF IT.
THAT'S THE IDEA
..AVOID ANYTHING
YOU CAN'T...
UNDER STANDING LESS?
AND LESS?

TODAY IS SATURDAY. YOU KNOW?
I KNOW IT'S SUDDEN, BUT WE'RE GOING TO TOKYO
YOU GO AND GET READY, TOO
KA-CHAK
I WAS JUST THINKING.
WE SHOULD GO AND SAY A PROPER "THANK YOU" TO EVERYONE IN TOKYO WHO HELPED YOU OUT.
WITH EVERYTHING GOING ON IT ENDS UP BEING *NOW*, BUT STILL...
WHEN I CALLED THE LAWYER, HE SAID HE WOULD ARRANGE THINGS.
AND I WANT TO SEE WHERE YOU GREW UP.

YUP.
ONIGIRI
SALMON?
SALMON FLAKES
CRUNCH
MIYA MADE THEM FOR YOU TOO
I JUST DECIDED ALL OF A SUDDEN! I'LL BE MORE CAREFUL!
SORRY!
IF YOU HAD JUST TOLD ME, THE SALTED SALMON SASHIMI (FROZEN) WAS ON SALE YESTERDAY AND THE FLAKES WERE ON FOR 98 YEN LAST SUNDAY...
GRRRR
GULP
CIRCLE T
SALMON FLAKES
SUBTOTAL
(TOWN TAX)
TOTAL RECEIVED
CHANGE
YOUR PURCHASES ARE AS NOTED ABOVE

CHAPTER 7: FUTURE DISHES

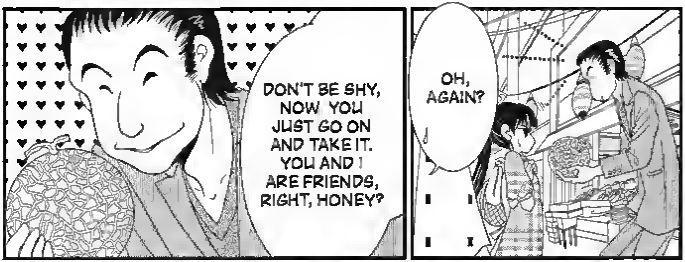
KURURI TAKASUGI. BORN MARCH 8. JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT.
MNCH
MNCH
CHOMP
はむっ
APPARENTLY, MIYA WORKED FOR A SMALL PUBLISHER IN TOSHIMA WARD.
MOTHER: MIYA; FATHER: UNKNOWN.
HEIGHT 152 CM, BLOOD TYPE A.
SHE WOULDN'T TELL ME HER WEIGHT
THANKS TO MIYA'S BOSS, KURURI USED TO HANG OUT IN A CORNER OF THE OFFICE AFTER KINDERGARTEN AND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.
SHE'D READ BOOKS OR WATCH HER MOTHER WORK.
ON THE OTHER END OF THE LINE: GOSUKE SATAKE
OH
BUT THIS IS NOTHING MORE THAN A "RECORD."

THE TASK FOR GETTING THE POSITION WAS TO "DESCRIBE" HER.
HARUMI! KURUR!!
MR. SATAKE!
I'M SO GLAD YOU'RE SAFE.
WHAT EXACTLY WERE YOU WONDERING?
NOT AT ALL. I WAS JUST WONDERING MYSELF HOW THE TWO OF YOU WERE DOING.
A LITTLE SOMETHING FOR YOU FROM NAGOYA
I'M SORRY FOR NOT GIVING YOU MORE NOTICE.
BOW
AFTER MIYA DIED, IT TOOK ABOUT A WEEK BEFORE I WAS ABLE TO GET IN TOUCH WITH YOU, HARUMI.
I GUESS IT WAS LIKE I ASKED YOU TO TAKE CARE OF THE FUNERAL AND THINGS, MR. SATAKE.
I'M SORRY
I WAS OVERSEAS. OUT IN THE COUNTRY WHERE THERE ARE NO PHONE LINES.
I COULDN'T CHECK MY EMAIL EITHER
NOT AT ALL. AN ATTORNEY IS FOR EXACTLY THAT SORT OF SITUATION.

THIS IS THE BUILDING THEY LIVED IN
BECAUSE IT WAS THE END OF THE YEAR IT SEEMS HE'D ALREADY FOUND SOMEONE ELSE TO MOVE IN
WE HAD TO DEAL WITH ALL THE FURNITURE AS WELL
THE LANDLORD HERE IS A TERRIBLE PERSON IT WAS THE DAY OF THE FUNERAL WHEN HE TOLD HER TO GET OUT
DASH
KURURI!
..

MAYBE NEXT YOU WANT TO SHOW ME THE PLACES YOU LIKED TO GO?
CHEAP SUPERMARKET
TIME SALE
BANANAS
PHILIPPINES
78円
OF COURSE!
BUY THESE! BUT...
IF WE BUY THEM HERE THERE'S THE TRIP HOME BUT BUT BUT
KITAMURA BAKERY
GOOD-NESS! HAVE YOU COME BACK TO US, KURURI?!
KURURI!
KU-RURI!
OH! IT'S KU-RURI!
I HEARD. IT'S TERRIBLE ABOUT YOUR MOTHER.
HERE, TAKE THESE WITH YOU
I TAKE IT YOU KEPT AN EYE ON KURURI?
DON

あさひ商店街
APPARENTLY, HER MOTHER AND THE PEOPLE AT THE OFFICE USED TO GIVE HER POCKET MONEY ALL THE TIME.
LIKE A GROWN-UP!
I HAD NO IDEA KURURI WAS SO SKILLED AT SHOPPING.
MOUNTAIN

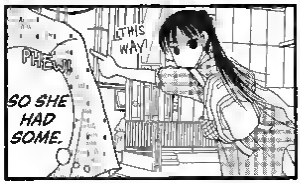

DON'T BE SHY, NOW YOU JUST GO ON AND TAKE IT. YOU AND I ARE FRIENDS, RIGHT, HONEY?
OH, AGAIN?

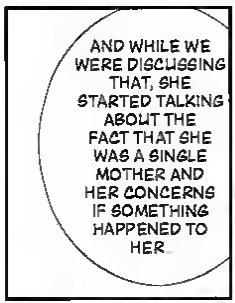
OH!
THEN THIS MUST BE LITTLE KURURI'S "NEW" GUARDIAN?
OH! MR. LAWYER!
HAYATO! YOU AGAIN!
...
.. SHUT UP.

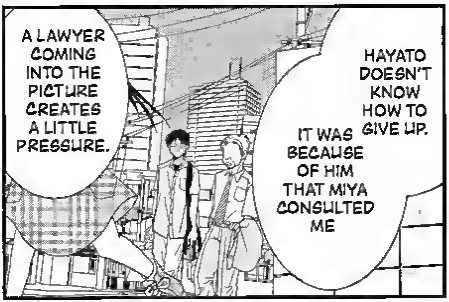
HAYATO!
WELL, IT'S JUST THAT MR. NEW HASN'T SAID "NO" YET.
ERFORMING PRODUCTIONS
STAR ANAGEMENT
HAYATO AOKI
WHAT?
HELLO THERE! HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT A CAREER IN THE BUSINESS FOR KURURI?
SHOVE
ソレ
THAT MAN'S WHERE IT STARTED
...UH?
SIGH
WELL THEN, MR. NEW! I'LL SEE YOU ANOTHER TIME!
IF YOU DON'T BEHAVE YOURSELF, THIS TIME I *WILL* TAKE LEGAL ACTION!
ONCE, HE WAS WAITING FOR HER AT THE SCHOOL GATES.
TOSHIMA MUNICIPAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
WELL, HE'S A SCOUT. AND THE FIRST TIME HE SAW KURURI RUNNING HER ERRANDS .
HAYATO'S THE OLDEST SON OF THE GREENGROCER AOKI. HE WORKS AT PERFORMING PRODUCTIONS
AOKI
HAYATO! WHAT'D YOU DO WITH THAT MELON?
I'LL PAY YOU BACK BY GETTING AHEAD IN THIS WORLD!

HEY, UM, KURURI WHAT ABOUT YOUR FRIENDS?

YOU'VE HAD A LONG CAREER AS A BULLY-EE, HUH, KURURI?
APPARENTLY, THAT WAS THE START OF HER CLASSMATES' MALICE.. WELL, SHE WAS BULLIED, YOU SEE
THE WORLD OF ENTERTAINMENT BREEDS JEALOUSY THERE ARE SO MANY CHILDREN THERE AS WELL


THIS WAY!
PRESS
SO SHE HAD SOME.


AND WHILE WE WERE DISCUSSING THAT, SHE STARTED TALKING ABOUT THE FACT THAT SHE WAS A SINGLE MOTHER AND HER CONCERNS IF SOMETHING HAPPENED TO HER


A LAWYER COMING INTO THE PICTURE CREATES A LITTLE PRESSURE.
HAYATO DOESN'T KNOW HOW TO GIVE UP.
IT WAS BECAUSE OF HIM THAT MIYA CONSULTED ME

UM... WHAT ABOUT KURURI'S FATHER? OR ANY OTHER FAMILY...
NOTHING

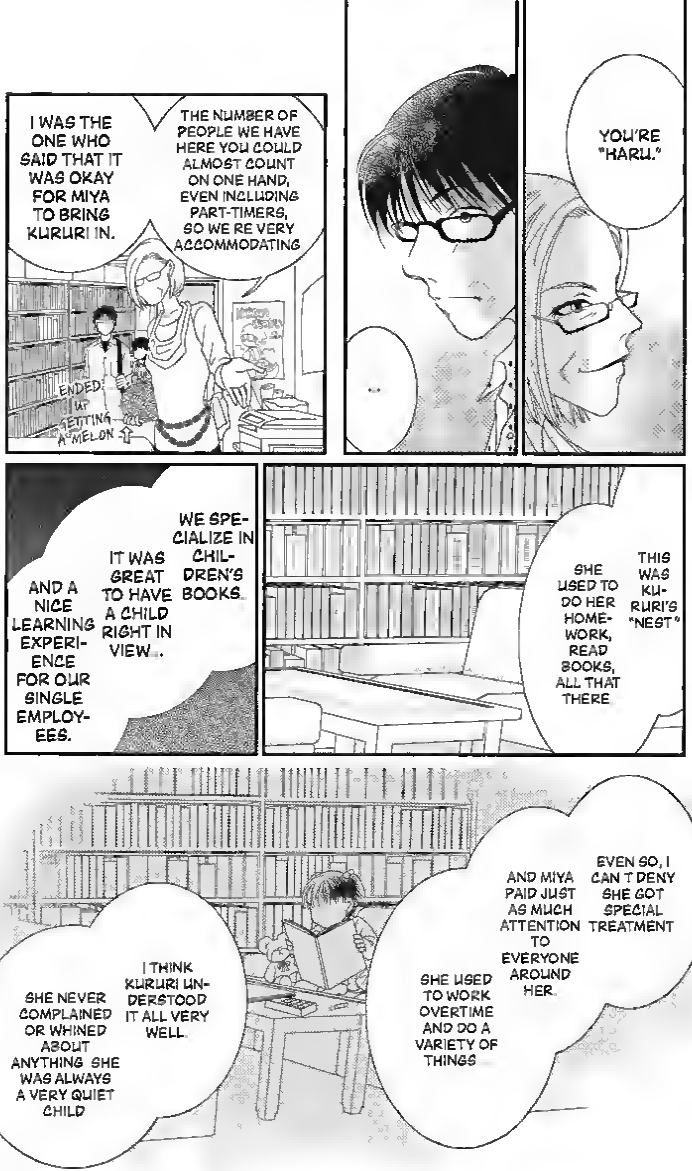
I RECOMMENDED SHE APPOINT A GUARDIAN AND PREPARE HER WILL.
BUT I NEVER IMAGINED WE'D END UP USING IT.

.."HARU'S THE ONE" FOR THE GUARDIAN
MIYA SIMPLY SAID...
I ACTUALLY WANTED TO KNOW MYSELF, ALTHOUGH IT'S NOT MY JOB.
BUT MIYA NEVER SAID A WORD ABOUT IT.
WHAT? HARU'S THE ONE?
NOT THE DAD, BUT ME? WHAT IF I COULDN'T TAKE HER?
WHY NOT MAKE IT IF THE FATHER DIES OR SOMETHING THEN... "THERE'S HARU" OR "SHE GOES TO HARU"?
ALL I KNOW IS THAT SHE WAS RAISING KURURI BY HERSELF IN THIS NEIGHBORHOOD.

CRUSHED
IN CURRENT LAW, MARRIAGE WITHIN THREE DEGREES OF KINSHIP IS NOT PERMITTED.
ALTHOUGH WHEN I LEARNED IN JUNIOR HIGH THAT I COULDN'T MARRY MY AUNT, MY FIRST LOVE ENDED.
HA HA HA HA!
BLUSH
MY GOOD-NESS!
THE TRUTH IS, MIYA WAS MY FIRST LOVE.
LIKE SHE QUIT THE FAMILY OR SOME-THING.
SO WHEN SHE DISAPPEARED SO SUDDENLY, IT WAS A REAL SHOCK.
BUT STILL, MIYA WAS ALWAYS MY FAVORITE RELATIVE.
TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK
IT'S BECAUSE YOU'RE FAMILY THAT YOU WERE CHOSEN FOR THE GUARD-IANSHIP.
DIDN'T I TELL YOU THAT?
友達
FRIEND
MIRROR

AH!
WHAT ABOUT A HUMAN FRIEND?
...
IT'S LIKE WHEN I WAS WALKING THROUGH THICK FORESTS.
I WAS AFRAID OF GETTING LOST IF
I TOOK MY EYES OFF MY GUIDE'S BACK FOR EVEN A MINUTE.
NARROW ROADS
NARROW SPACES
THERE'S NO ROOM TO BROADEN YOUR VIEWPOINT.
KURURI MUST HAVE...
...LIVED HER LIFE IN THIS TOWN...
WITH HER EYES ON MIYA'S BACK.

THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF AGREED TO MEET US
TODAY THE OFFICE'S CLOSED, BUT...
IT'S WITHIN WALKING DIS-TANCE?
THEY REALLY LIVED IN A COMPACT WORLD
THIS WAS WHERE MIYA WORKED.
KURURI!
IT'S NICE TO MEET YOU I'M EIKO NAGAI.
AH! IT'S EMPTY!
HELLO. THIS IS A LITTLE SOMETHING FROM NAGO—
MS NAGAI, THIS IS HARUMI.
BOW
KIOSK
HOW HAVE YOU BEEN?
SO

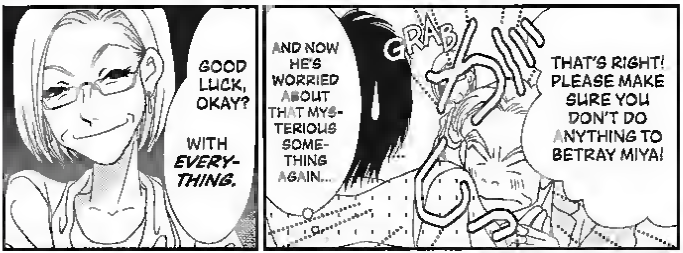

I WAS THE ONE WHO SAID THAT IT WAS OKAY FOR MIYA TO BRING KURURI IN.
THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WE HAVE HERE YOU COULD ALMOST COUNT ON ONE HAND, EVEN INCLUDING PART-TIMERS, SO WE RE VERY ACCOMMODATING
ENDED UP GETTING A MELON
YOU'RE "HARU."
...
AND A NICE LEARNING EXPERIENCE FOR OUR SINGLE EMPLOYEES.
IT WAS GREAT TO HAVE A CHILD RIGHT IN VIEW...
WE SPECIALIZE IN CHILDREN'S BOOKS.
SHE USED TO DO HER HOMEWORK, READ BOOKS, ALL THAT THERE
THIS WAS KURURI'S "NEST"
SHE NEVER COMPLAINED OR WHINED ABOUT ANYTHING SHE WAS ALWAYS A VERY QUIET CHILD
I THINK KURURI UNDERSTOOD IT ALL VERY WELL.
SHE USED TO WORK OVERTIME AND DO A VARIETY OF THINGS
AND MIYA PAID JUST AS MUCH ATTENTION TO EVERYONE AROUND HER.
EVEN SO, I CAN'T DENY SHE GOT SPECIAL TREATMENT

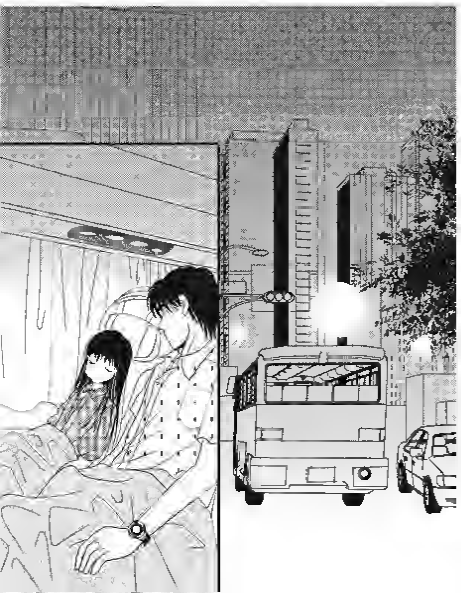
I GET IT. THAT'S WHY KURURI'S SO QUIET.
OH!
WHAT IS IT?
MIYA MADE IT.
IT'S STILL IN THERE, IS IT?
!
IT'S FREEZER BURNT
WHAT DID YOU FIND?
NO WONDER. IT'S BEEN IN THERE FOR ALMOST SIX MONTHS.
SPINACH & BACON SAUTEE
SHE USED TO FEED US ALL THE TIME, TOO.
SHE MADE THINGS IN ADVANCE AND LEFT THEM HERE TO GIVE TO KURURI WHEN SHE WAS WORKING OVERTIME.
VERY SMART, THAT MIYA
I WONDER IF YOU COULD STILL EAT IT?
I'VE EATEN MEAT THAT'S BEEN FROZEN FOR ALMOST A YEAR.
LET IT GO.
YOU CAN'T EAT THAT ANY-MORE
KURURI.

KUUUURURI! I'LL PUT SPINACH IN MONDAY'S BENTO. I'VE GOT THE GENERAL IDEA OF HOW TO MAKE IT.
SLAP
BY THE WAY, HARUMI, WHERE ARE YOU STAYING TONIGHT?
WE HAVEN'T DECIDED YET
I'LL FIND SOMEWHERE FOR YOU YOU'D LIKE SOME PLACE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD?
KURURI, IS THERE ANYWHERE YOU'D LIKE TO GO?
WE COULD GO A LITTLE FAR AWAY, IF YOU WANT
GRAB
HOME

I WANT TO GO HOME.
GOOD-NESS.
I'VE NEVER SEEN KURURI PLEAD FOR ANYTHING BEFORE
AT THE STOP FOR THE EXPRESSWAY BUS
THANK YOU SO MUCH. WE'RE SORRY TO HAVE IMPOSED.
NO, NOT AT ALL. IT WAS A PLEA-SURE.
DID YOU LEARN ANY-THING ABOUT KURURI?
BOW
OF ALL THE NEW CHILDREN'S BOOKS!

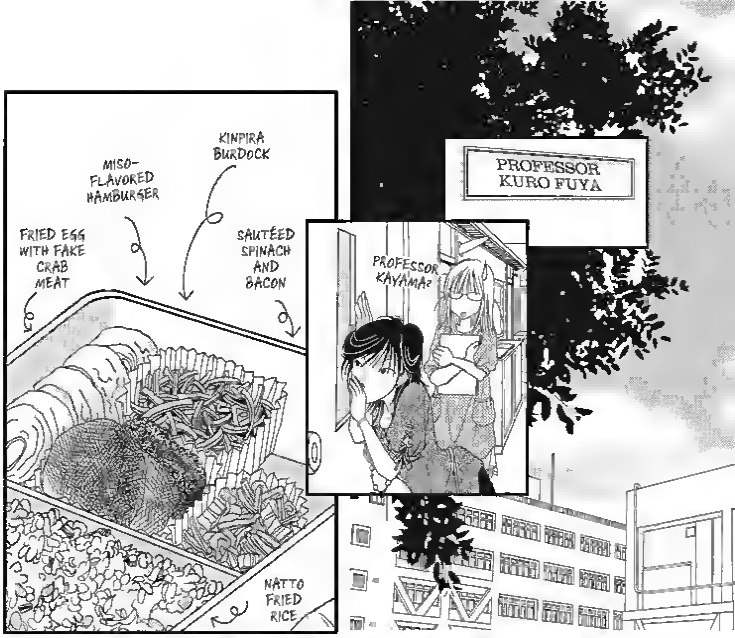
I GUESS...I DID.
MAYBE THAT KURURI LOVED MIYA MORE THAN ANYTHING, AND MIYA LOVED KURURI MORE THAN ANYTHING.
THAT'S REALLY CLEAR TO ME NOW.


THAT'S RIGHT! PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU DON'T DO ANYTHING TO BETRAY MIYA!
AND NOW HE'S WORRIED ABOUT THAT MYSTERIOUS SOMETHING AGAIN...
GOOD LUCK, OKAY?
WITH *EVERYTHING.*

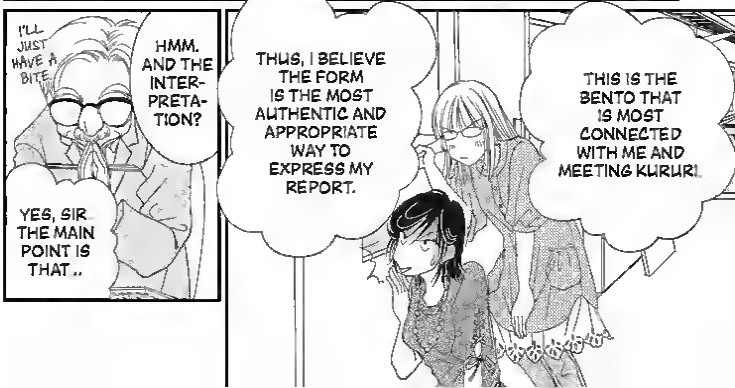

NOW DEPARTING!
?
WHAT? HOW SO?
LOOKS LIKE A ROUGH ROAD AHEAD.

THAT WAS A FULL DAY.
KURURI'S EYELASHES ARE SO LONG
I CAUGHT A GLIMPSE OF A PIECE OF KURURI.
THINGS I DIDN'T KNOW.
THINGS I COULDN'T EVEN KNOW THAT I DIDN'T KNOW.
THE THINGS I'VE LEARNED GIVE RISE TO OTHER QUESTIONS.
MAYBE IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO SEE EVERYTHING.
THE RECORD REFLECTS MY OWN INEFFECTIVENESS.
IT'S CHALLENGING WORK.
HMMMRLD?
WHAT?

WHAT CAN I DO NOW?
TUG TUG
DID KURURI WANT TO COME HOME JUST TO GO TO SUNDAY'S SALES...?
THERE ARE LOTS OF SUPERMARKET FLYERS FOR SUNDAY


PROFESSOR KURO FUYA
PROFESSOR KAYAMA?
MISO-FLAVORED HAMBURGER
KINPIRA BURDOCK
FRIED EGG WITH FAKE CRAB MEAT
SAUTÉED SPINACH AND BACON
NATTO FRIED RICE

YES, SIR!
THIS IS YOUR REPORT?


I'LL JUST HAVE A BITE.
HMM. AND THE INTERPRETATION?
YES, SIR. THE MAIN POINT IS THAT..
THUS, I BELIEVE THE FORM IS THE MOST AUTHENTIC AND APPROPRIATE WAY TO EXPRESS MY REPORT.
THIS IS THE BENTO THAT IS MOST CONNECTED WITH ME AND MEETING KURURI.

...EVERY INGREDIENT WAS PURCHASED ON SALE.
OH!
Food
↓
I'UUDO
↓
TOPOGRAPHY
...
OLD MAN JOKE?
GEOGRAPHY JOKE
YOU'RE NOT PUTTING "FOOD" IN THE TITLE? I'LL GIVE YOU A HIGHER GRADE...
BENTO REPORT COMMENTARY
EACH AND EVERY ITEM IS PART OF AN EPISODE THAT DESCRIBES HER
IT IS THE OPINION OF THIS RESEARCHER THAT THE DISH THAT FILLS THAT SPACE WILL BE—
NO, IT WILL LIKELY BE THE THING OBTAINED WHEN SHE OPENS HER HEART TO MORE AND DIFFERENT PEOPLE.
I SET IT ASIDE TO EXPRESS FUTURE CHANGES AND PROSPECTS.
AND IT'S NOT THAT I FORGOT TO PUT ANYTHING IN THIS AREA.
KURURI WAS ALONE WITH HER MOTHER FOR SO LONG..

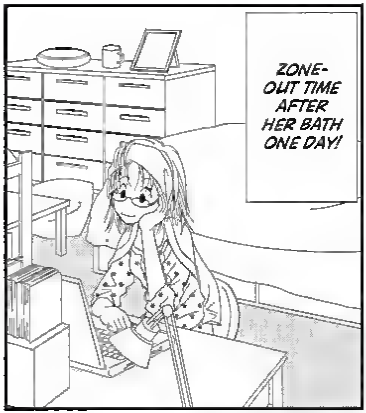
OOOOH! YOU REALLY DODGED THAT ONE!
INCREDIBLE TAKASUGI YOU ALWAYS USED TO FREEZE UP AT UNEXPECTED QUESTIONS
THE OPINION OF THIS RE-SEARCHER ...
IS THAT WITH AN UNSTABLE EXISTENCE, A FAMILY...NEEDS EXTERNAL SUPPORT SO THAT THEY DON'T LEAN OFF TO THE SIDE!
JUMP
I'M INCLINED TO SAY IT'S JUST AN EMPTY SPACE. BIT OF A FAILURE AS A BENTO, ISN'T IT?
SHHHF
GAH!
UH... WELL...
AAGH!
ELIMINATING THE STEP OF PUTTING TEXT ON A PAGE MEANS THAT THERE'S NO PAPER.
BUT, HMM, WELL, THIS CAN'T EXACTLY BE PUBLISHED IN A JOURNAL, NOW CAN IT?
BUT, WELL..
CORPSE
AN OCCUPATIONAL RESEARCHER ISN'T ONLY ABOUT PAPERS
I SUPPOSE THIS WORKS FOR AN EMPLOYMENT TEST

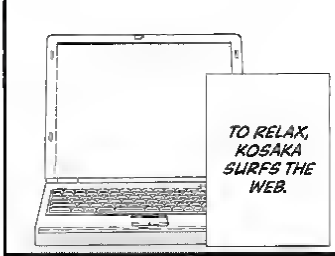
AS A RESEARCHER, AND FOR YOUR FAMILY.
KEEP IT UP
BANG
CON-GRATU-LATIONS!
I'LL SUBMIT YOUR NAME TO THE COMMIT-TEE.
SO, THAT'S THAT...
AND TO CELEBRATE, UNAGI! YOUR TREAT, TAKASUGI!
I HAVE THIS BENTO, SO I'LL PASS THIS TIME
ALL RIGHT!

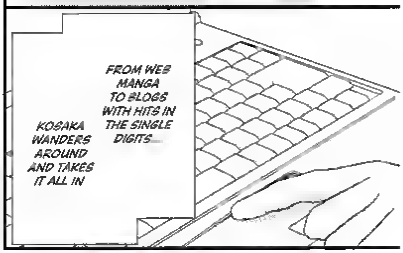
CLASS 1-2
KINSHI
IN JAPANESE CIVIL LAW
MARRIAGE BETWEEN RELATIVES WITHIN THREE DEGREES OF KINSHIP IS NOT PERMITTED.
YOUR PARENTS ARE ONE DEGREE OF KINSHIP, YOUR SIBLINGS WOULD BE THE SECOND DEGREE
ONE.
SO THEN IT'S OKAY TO MARRY YOUR COUSIN!
COME ON!
YOU WANT TO?
MOM
ME
DAD
HARUMI
TWO.
THREE.
FOUR.

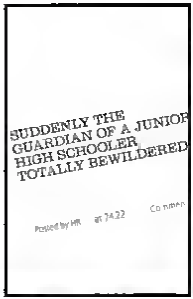
A DAY IN THE LIFE OF KOSAKA

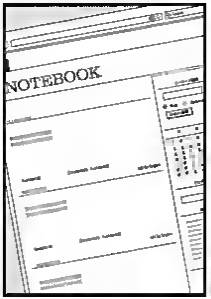
SHE CAME DOWN FROM HOKKAIDO AS A SPECIAL RESEARCHER.
RINA KOSAKA.
LIVING EXPENSES CAN BE SQUEEZED OUT OF THIS, TOO
THOSE ACCEPTED ARE SUPPORTED WITH RESEARCH SUBSIDIES AND GRANTS.
THE SPECIAL RESEARCHER SYSTEM WAS CREATED WITH THE AIM OF NURTURING YOUNG SCHOLARS.
THERE ARE NO GUARANTEES ONCE THE SPECIAL RESEARCH TERM IS OVER, SO THERE IS ALSO A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF PRESSURE TO PRODUCE RESULTS DURING THE TERM AND TO SECURE A POSITION SOMEWHERE.
EVERY DAY IS A TOTAL FOCUS ON WORK.
A SPECIAL RESEARCHER IS OBLIGED TO DEVOTE HERSELF TO HER RESEARCH AND..
IS NOT PERMITTED ANY PART-TIME JOBS OR OTHER ACTIVITIES.


ZONE-OUT TIME AFTER HER BATH ONE DAY!

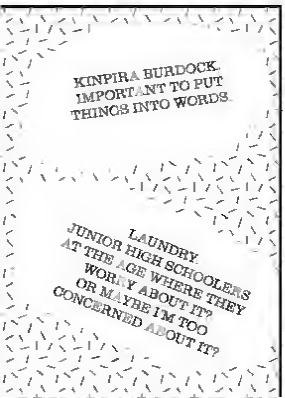

TO RELAX, KOSAKA SURFS THE WEB.

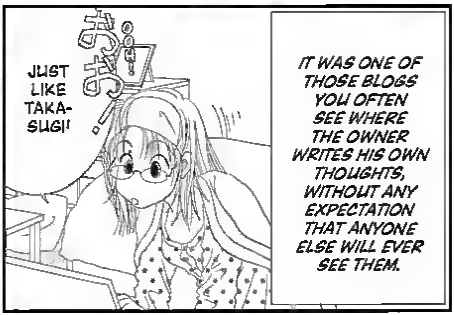

KOSAKA WANDERS AROUND AND TAKES IT ALL IN
FROM WEB MANGA TO BLOGS WITH HITS IN THE SINGLE DIGITS...


SUDDENLY THE GUARDIAN OF A JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLER TOTALLY BEWILDERED
Posted by MR at 14:22
Comment


NOTEBOOK

HUH?


KINPIRA BURDOCK. IMPORTANT TO PUT THINGS INTO WORDS.
LAUNDRY.
JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLERS AT THE AGE WHERE THEY WORRY ABOUT IT?
OR MAYBE I'M TOO CONCERNED ABOUT IT?


JUST LIKE TAKA-SUGI!
IT WAS ONE OF THOSE BLOGS YOU OFTEN SEE WHERE THE OWNER WRITES HIS OWN THOUGHTS, WITHOUT ANY EXPECTATION THAT ANYONE ELSE WILL EVER SEE THEM.

大迷惑
SUPER PUT-OUT...
ZZZZZ
WHAT?! WHAAAT?!
THIS IS ACTUALLY TAKASUGI?!
どだっ
WELL?
NOTEBOOK
MAY 7, 2009
HAMBURGER SEASONING IS MISO
WORKED OUT NICELY WITH SOME LEAVES FOR COLOR
WHAT?!

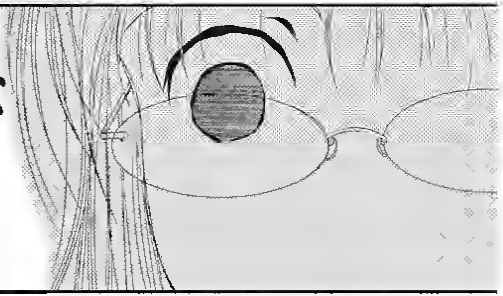
風谷久郎
KURO FUYA
=
KF
高杉久留里
KURURI TAKASUGI
=
KT
HM? KURO FUYA IS KF
SO THEN KURURI WOULD BE KT.
SO, RK...
どどど
BA BUMP
BA BUMP
CLICK CLICK
PROFESSOR FUYA!
あはは
KF WORK
TERRIBLE HANDWRITING
CAN'T READ HIS NOTES
KURURI!
LATELY, BEEN THINKING RK IS CUTE

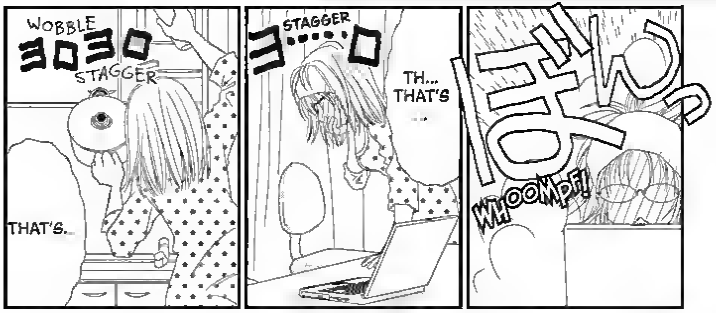
小坂 りいな

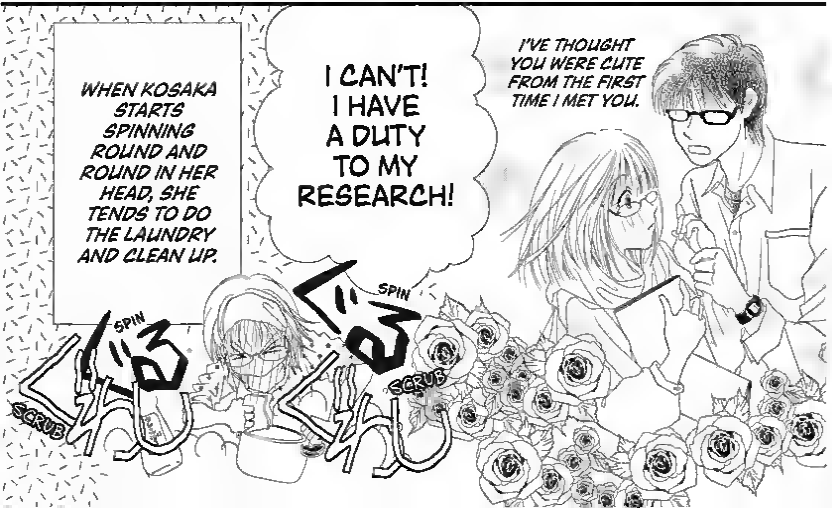
RINA KOSAKA

||

RK



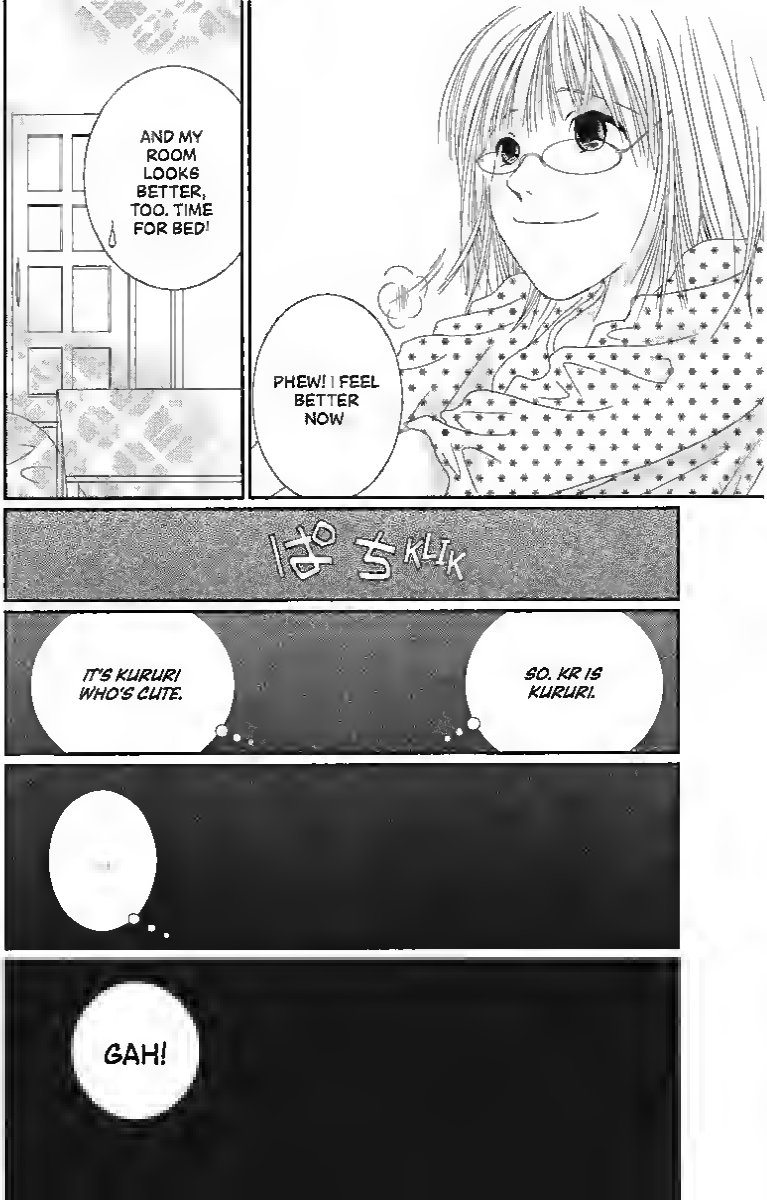



WHEN KOSAKA STARTS SPINNING ROUND AND ROUND IN HER HEAD, SHE TENDS TO DO THE LAUNDRY AND CLEAN UP.
I CAN'T! I HAVE A DUTY TO MY RESEARCH!
I'VE THOUGHT YOU WERE CUTE FROM THE FIRST TIME I MET YOU.
SPIN
SCRUB
SPIN
SCRUB

BUT WHILE I'M ON BREAK FROM MY RESEARCH, I WON'T HAVE ANY INCOME
UNEMPLOYED
CLASSIFIEDS
THERE'S NO WAY MY FATHER WOULD FORGIVE ME!
B-B-B-BEFORE IT GETS TO THAT, I'LL ASK MY...
ARRANGING THE CONTENTS OF MY DRESSER...
SHUFFLE
SORT
NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, THERE IS THAT CLAUSE
DON'T WORRY. A BREAK FROM RESEARCH FOR MATERNITY LEAVE IS PERMITTED.
出産
育児
MATERNITY LEAVE
WHOOMP!?
PROFESSOR KAYAMA
JUST DOING A BIG CLEAN-UP OF THE HOUSE!
AT THIS HOUR?
KOSAKA, WHAT'S GOING ON? YOU'RE PANTING.
PROFESSOR KAYAMA!
GOODNESS
PHEW
THE NUMBER OF THE OFFICE. IT SHOULD BE IN THE ADDRESS BOOK ON MY COMPUTER. I'LL EMAIL IT TO YOU
OH, SURE.

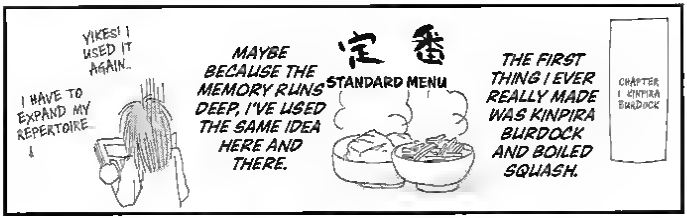
Ah!
名前
REIKO KAYAMA
THERE SHE IS!
LET'S SEE, PROFESSOR KAYAMA
香山 玲子 = RK
REIKO KAYAMA
N-N-NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, I THOUGHT THEY JUST GOT ALONG BECAUSE THEY WERE THE SAME AGE.
RECENTLY, I HAVE BEEN QUITE ENAMORED OF A PERSON I'VE KNOWN SINCE MY SCHOOL DAYS. PERHAPS THIS IS SOME KIND OF CHANGE IN MY EMOTIONAL STATE.
SPIN
WHAT'S UP!
SPIN
RATTLE
SHUFFLE
EMAIL SENT! .. SO..
I HAVE TO STOP. I NEED TO SEND PROFESSOR KAYAMA THAT EMAIL.
SORTED

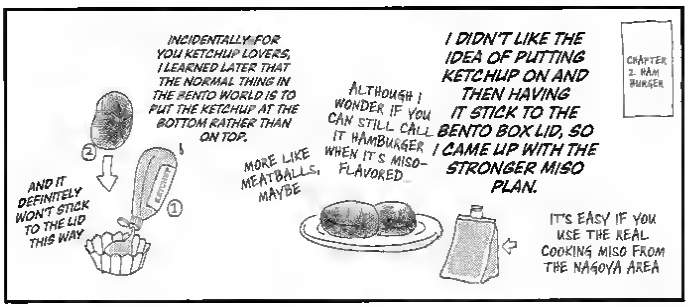
MAIL
NOTEBOOK
JUNE 16, 2009
CONSULTED WITH RK'S SUPERVISOR.
JUNIOR HIGH KIDS ARE HARD.
JUNE 15, 2009
BOUGHT TAPE AT THE CONVENIENCE STORE
AS SOON AS I GO ONLINE, I GET LOST LOOKING AT STUFF
TAKASUGI! RE PUT UP A NEW POST!
風谷教授
KYOJU FUYA
=
KF
久留里
KURURI
=
KR
SO KURURI'S NAME IS THE SAME AS WHAT HE CALLS HER!
I GET IT! PROFESSOR FUYA IS KF!*
WENT TOO FAR
JANUARY 1
HAKENMURA, THE TEMPORARY WORKERS' NEW YEAR'S CAMP
CAN'T THINK ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE'S PROBLEMS!
THIS YEAR, I REALLY WANT TO FIND A POSITION
...
EVEN FURTHER BACK
FEBRUARY 22
KS STARTS IN THE LAB IN THE SPRING, SEEMS PRETTY SERIOUS
SO KS IS ME?
RIGHT, "KOSAKA"!
LOOKING AT PAST POSTS
MARCH 2
HELPED WITH SK'S LESSONS.
EVEN THOUGH WE'RE OLD CLASSMATES, SHE COULD AT LEAST PAY ME A PART-TIMER FEE.
SO THEN THIS SK THAT SOUNDS LIKE PROFESSOR KAYAMA...
OH RIGHT! SHE'S "WOMEN'S UNIVERSITY S. KAYAMA."

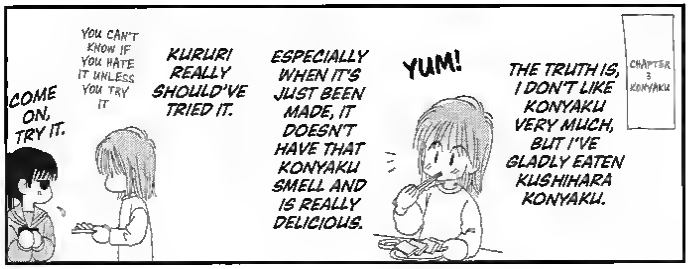

AND MY ROOM LOOKS BETTER, TOO. TIME FOR BED!
PHEW! I FEEL BETTER NOW
KR 5 KLIK
IT'S KURURI WHO'S CUTE.
SO. KR IS KURURI.
GAH!

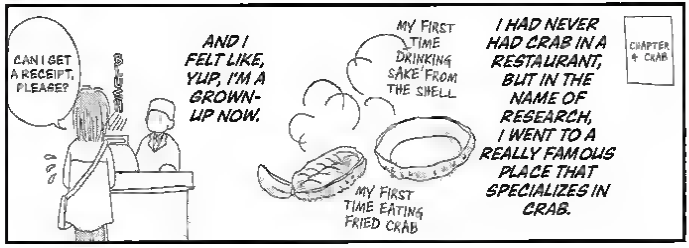
LEAP
SPIN
SPIN
WHAAAAT?!
GAH! I... I...?
WHRRRRRR
SOUND OF THE VACUUM CLEANER
IT WAS THE DAY KOSAKA REALIZED HER OWN FEELINGS.
WHAT TIME DOES SHE THINK IT IS?!
SHUT UP!

POST SCRIPT
THANK YOU FOR COMING THIS FAR WITH ME.
THIS IS THE FIRST BOOK OF TAKASUGI-SAN'S OBENTO.
NO, THAT'S NOT--OH WELL, A LITTLE.
KAY THESE PICTURES OF KURURI I MEAN, RIGHT KINDA LIKE YOU CAN SEE THE PHOTOGRAPHER'S ULTERIOR MOTIVES, RIGHT
SPIN
SPIN
I OFTEN THINK THAT GOING SHOPPING AT THE SUPERMARKET IS LIKE A ROLE-PLAYING GAME.
SHOULD I BUY THIS HERE?
I DON'T HAVE ANY LEFT AT HOME.
IT'S NOT CHEAP, BUT IT'S THE DISCOUNT PRICE
BUT IF I WAIT 'TIL THE WEEKEND, MAYBE IT'LL GO ON SALE
OR MAYBE THE REAL VERSION OF A SIMULATION GAME.
勝
負
BATTLE
KURURI'S HOBBY IS ACTUALLY MY HOBBY.
I ALWAYS FORGET PEOPLE'S NAMES AND FACES, BUT I NEVER FORGET THE PRICE OF SOMETHING
SUNDAY SPECIAL
99
298
I'M SURE KURURI WOULD UNDERSTAND.
THAT'S TOO BORING FOR A JUNIOR HIGH GIRL'S HOBBY!


CHAPTER 1 KINPIRA BURDOCK
YIKES! I USED IT AGAIN..
I HAVE TO EXPAND MY REPERTOIRE...
MAYBE BECAUSE THE MEMORY RUNS DEEP, I'VE USED THE SAME IDEA HERE AND THERE.
定番
STANDARD MENU
THE FIRST THING I EVER REALLY MADE WAS KINPIRA BURDOCK AND BOILED SQUASH.


CHAPTER 2 HAM BURGER
INCIDENTALLY FOR YOU KETCHUP LOVERS, I LEARNED LATER THAT THE NORMAL THING IN THE BENTO WORLD IS TO PUT THE KETCHUP AT THE BOTTOM RATHER THAN ON TOP.
AND IT DEFINITELY WON'T STICK TO THE LID THIS WAY
MORE LIKE MEATBALLS, MAYBE
ALTHOUGH I WONDER IF YOU CAN STILL CALL IT HAMBURGER WHEN IT'S MISO-FLAVORED
I DIDN'T LIKE THE IDEA OF PUTTING KETCHUP ON AND THEN HAVING IT STICK TO THE BENTO BOX LID, SO I CAME UP WITH THE STRONGER MISO PLAN.
IT'S EASY IF YOU USE THE REAL COOKING MISO FROM THE NAGOYA AREA


CHAPTER 3 KONYAKU
COME ON, TRY IT.
YOU CAN'T KNOW IF YOU HATE IT UNLESS YOU TRY IT
KURURI REALLY SHOULD'VE TRIED IT.
ESPECIALLY WHEN IT'S JUST BEEN MADE, IT DOESN'T HAVE THAT KONYAKU SMELL AND IS REALLY DELICIOUS.
YUM!
THE TRUTH IS, I DON'T LIKE KONYAKU VERY MUCH, BUT I'VE GLADLY EATEN KUSHIHARA KONYAKU.


CHAPTER 4 CRAB
CAN I GET A RECEIPT, PLEASE?
AND I FELT LIKE, YUP, I'M A GROWN-UP NOW.
MY FIRST TIME DRINKING SAKE FROM THE SHELL
MY FIRST TIME EATING FRIED CRAB
I HAD NEVER HAD CRAB IN A RESTAURANT, BUT IN THE NAME OF RESEARCH, I WENT TO A REALLY FAMOUS PLACE THAT SPECIALIZES IN CRAB.

EVEN PUTTING IN A LOT OF THE POTATO STARCH AND THICKENING IT UP, I NEVER MANAGED TO GET PAST THE SAUCE ISSUE.

IT WON'T COOK OFF

I READ IN SOME RECIPE BOOK TO COOK OFF THE SAUCE, SO I TRIED IT AND IT ENDED UP BURNING.

THE BENTO MOISTURE ISSUE
THE SAUCE ISSUE

OF COURSE, I JUST THROW IT TOGETHER. BUT I OFTEN MAKE CHINESE EGGPLANT AND SICHUAN TOFU.

I LIKE CHINESE FOOD BECAUSE YOU CAN MAKE IT PRETTY QUICKLY.

CHAPTER 5 CHINESE EGGPLANT

I FIGURED THIS KIND OF HIGH-LEVEL TECHNIQUE WAS A BIT MUCH FOR KURURI, SO I KEPT IT SIMPLE.

USING TUNA ON A DAILY BASIS IS PRETTY TOKYO-STYLE.

ACCORDING TO MR. "FU," IF YOU ADD SOME MINCED TUNA WITH SOY SAUCE TO YOUR NATTO FRIED RICE, IT'S REALLY TASTY.

I GUESS IF WE'RE TALKING ABOUT TOKYO-STYLE STUFF, IT'S NATTO .. RIGHT?

CHAPTER 6 NATTO FRIED RICE

M-MINCED TUNA

FROM MR FU

WHEN I LOOKED INTO NATTO DISHES, MR. "KITCHEN-FU" IN IKEBUKURO IN TOKYO GAVE ME THIS RECIPE.

THANKS FOR ALL THE DELICIOUS DINNERS!

I LOVED THE WAY IT WAS COMPLETELY MELDED WITH THE RICE AROUND IT.

MIXED INTO THE RICE HERE

MY FAVORITE WHEN I WAS A KID WAS ONIGIRI WITH NORI SEAWEED BOILED IN SOY SAUCE

THE ONIGIRI THEY EAT AT THE BEGINNING IS SALMON, BUT...

THIS CHAPTER SORT OF SUMS UP ALL THE DISHES FROM THE BOOK

CHAPTER 7 VARIOUS

HARU'S FIELD IS GEOGRAPHY.
AND SINCE SHE'S SURROUNDED BY PEOPLE IN GEOGRAPHY, I THINK I'D LIKE KURURI TO LEARN THAT "ECONOMICAL" IS NOT JUST ABOUT PRICES.
PRESSURE
OOF
YOU NEED TO COMMUNICATE
WELL THEN, IN THIS FIRST BOOK, HARU FOUND A POSITION, HAPPILY ENOUGH.
THE STORY COULDN'T REALLY MOVE FORWARD WITHOUT HIM GETTING A JOB, SO I DIDN'T HAVE MUCH OF A CHOICE. .
BAM
WHEN YOU SAY NO CHOICE
IT'S GOING TO GET A LOT HARDER FOR YOU AS A SCHOLAR GOOD LUCK!
AND ALL YOU READERS KIND ENOUGH TO PICK UP THIS VOLUME, THANK YOU SO MUCH.
I HOPE WE'LL MEET AGAIN!
I'M CURRENTLY DESPERATELY SEEKING ANY AND ALL IDEAS TO CONTINUE (HA HA!)
ALL THE GEOGRAPHY PROFESSORS WHO GIVE ME IDEAS, MY FRIENDS, MY FAMILY, THE PEOPLE IN KUSHIHARA, TOKYO, THE BLOGS, ALL OF YOU WHO ARE CLOSE TO MY HEART.
AND NOW ...
NOZOMI YANAHARA
JANUARY 3, 2010

TAKASUGI-SAN S OBENTO 1

高杉さん家のおべんとう 1

THANKS FOR THE DELICIOUS TREAT

TAKASUGISANCHI NO OBENTOU

TAKASUGI-SAN'S OBENTO

高杉さん家のおべんとう

-1-

Harumi may be finished with graduate school, but he's 31, unemployed, and not exactly living the dream! But when a beloved aunt passes away and leaves him in charge of his striking young cousin Kururi, Harumi suddenly feels his dull, depressing days take on an exciting new flavor...

Takasugi-san's Obento serves up bittersweet memories and savory surprises in a perfectly-presented feast! Can a hapless post-grad help a severely shy junior chef come out of her shell? Will the unlikely duo learn to both cook and live in sweet harmony?

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